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90-99

July CP receipts
near \$11.5 million

N-CO

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptists gave almost \$11.5 million to the SBC Cooperative Program in July, reported Harold C. Bennett, president and treasurer of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee.

The convention's unified budget received \$11,475,800 at the national level last month. That is a decrease of \$46,122, or 0.4 percent, from July 1989, Bennett said.

July receipts brought the year-to-date total to \$117,740,707 at the end of 10 months into this fiscal year. That is a gain of \$2,517,674, or 2.19 percent, over the first 10 months of the previous year.

Bennett stressed the fact that the SBC Cooperative Program of \$117.7 million represents only a portion of the total Cooperative Program contributions. The balance of the Cooperative Program funds, approximately 61 percent, are retained by the state conventions for mission work within the states.

The Cooperative Program is funded by contributions from individual Southern Baptists. Their gifts are processed through budgets of local churches and state Baptist conventions before reaching the Executive Committee for distribution to organizations that conduct evangelistic, missionary and educational endeavors worldwide.

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101,000 professions of faith
projected from Here's Hope

By Mark Wingfield

N-CO ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ Baptist Press
8/1/90
(N.M.)

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--An estimated 101,000 people made professions of faith in Jesus Christ during Southern Baptists' "Here's Hope" revivals, according to Home Mission Board projections.

The projections also indicate that 22,500 churches participated in the nationwide simultaneous revivals and that 75,000 people were baptized during the meetings.

Clay Price, director of the HMB's program research department, reported the projections to state evangelism directors during their annual meeting at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center.

The projections are based upon a stratified, random sampling of 1,500 Southern Baptist churches. Responses reflect results only from those churches that held revivals between March 18 and April 29. Although that was the official six weeks set aside for the simultaneous revivals, some churches were not able to hold their meetings within that period.

Richard Harris, the HMB's director of mass evangelism, said he believes the actual results will be significantly higher when churches that held revivals after April are included.

"The bottom line is what the total number of baptisms will be at year's end," he said. "We estimate baptisms in the SBC may be up this year from 10,000 to 20,000."

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Last year Southern Baptist churches nationwide reported 351,107 baptisms, or an average of 6,752 baptisms per week.

During the six-week revival period, Southern Baptist churches nearly doubled that weekly average, with 12,531 baptisms per week.

The 22,500 churches projected to have participated in the simultaneous effort represent 63 percent of the denomination's churches. Harris had hoped 75 percent of all churches would participate.

Had an additional 12 percent of SBC churches held revivals, the number of professions of faith would likely have approached the HMB's goal of 175,000, he said.

In the denomination's last simultaneous revival effort, dubbed "Good News America" in 1986, churches recorded 145,000 professions of faith and 103,000 baptisms. However, those figures reflect results over a broader period of time than the six weeks covered in this year's survey.

Harris said he is pleased that a larger percentage of people making professions of faith during Here's Hope revivals followed through with baptism. In 1986, 71 percent of professions of faith resulted in baptisms. This year the baptism rate increased to 75 percent.

Some results from the Here's Hope revivals cannot be measured by statistics, Harris added. "One of the greatest things that happened was the media campaign. It caused Southern Baptists to take pride in who we are and what we stand for as Christians in this nation.

"While a lot of unbelievers heard a message of hope, it excited the saints and motivated them to want to be a part of something bigger than any one of us."

The Here's Hope emphasis included a national media blitz using television, radio, magazines and newspapers. Local churches were able to use the same professionally created ads that the HMB placed in TIME magazine and on national cable television channels.

The HMB telephone survey was conducted between June 15 and July 3 with a 75 percent response rate. Findings were weighted to account for church size.

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Colleges to exchange books
with Soviet Union schools

By Tim Fields

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Twelve Southern Baptist colleges and universities are among 33 U.S. educational institutions which will exchange reference books, including the Bible, with college libraries in the Soviet Union.

The unprecedented book exchange between the U.S. and Russian colleges is being arranged by First Foundations, Inc., of Memphis, Tenn., a non-profit, non-sectarian institution, and Inform-Systema of Moscow.

"Under terms of the agreement, First Foundations will send sets of four reference books reflecting United States culture to Inform-Systema which will distribute the books to university libraries in all Soviet republics," said Dick Jensen, president of First Foundations. "In return, Inform-Systema will send sets of four reference books about Soviet culture to be distributed to U.S. colleges which choose to participate in the plan."

The four reference books on United States culture include The Russian Synodal Edition of the Bible, Webster's New World Dictionary, The Beginning of the Republic by Clarence B. Carson and The Story of the Constitution by Sol Bloom.

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The reference books destined for American college libraries include the Soviet Encyclopedic Dictionary (Moscow), The World of History by B.A. Rybakov, Human Beings and Noosphere by N.N. Moiseev and Another Chance Won't Be Given (Moscow).

"It is important to note that our exchange involves books, not bodies," Jensen pointed out. "Many fine exchanges of students and teachers are in progress or are planned, but Operation Knigi ("knigi" means books in Russian), is the first time books have been swapped between our two countries in such large quantities and with the approval of the USSR State Committee for Public Education."

According to Jensen, the Bible was included in the American reference books because it has had such a major impact on American history and culture and because it was requested by students and professors of Russian colleges who recognize its importance. The Russian Synodal Edition of the Bible was chosen because it is recognized and accepted by the Russian Orthodox Church.

Jensen said the four Soviet reference books are all "glasnost era" publications.

"The conditions of the exchange require that all enrolled students of participating colleges in the U.S. and the Soviet Union will have free access to the exchanged volumes," Jensen emphasized.

The exchange program has merit because it provides much needed English language books to Soviet libraries and supports the work of Southern Baptist colleges and universities which already are involved in ongoing education exchange programs with the Soviet Union, said Arthur L. Walker Jr., executive director of the Southern Baptist Education.

Any private college in America can become a partner in Operation Knigi by making a \$40 contribution to cover the cost of the four reference books being sent to Soviet libraries.

Southern Baptist educational institutions participating in the plan to date include: Anderson College, Anderson, S.C.; Belmont College, Nashville, Tenn.; Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, Tenn.; Gardner-Webb College, Boiling Springs, N.C.; Mississippi College, Clinton, Miss.; Mobile College, Mobile, Ala.; North Greenville College, Tigerville, S.C.; Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, Ark.; Southern Baptist College, Walnut Ridge, Ark.; Union University, Jackson, Tenn.; Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, N.C.; and Wingate College, Wingate, N.C.

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Southeastern Seminary students
make history in Czechoslovakia

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F-FMB

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--A group of students from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., was the first group since before World War II to hold an open air evangelistic meeting in the town of Pisek, Czechoslovakia.

The seven students and one professor shared testimonies, preached, performed pantomimes, and sang for the crowd of about 120 people gathered in the Pisek city park.

After the meeting on the street the group distributed tracts to and mingled with the Czech people who had gathered. They were able to share the gospel and invite them to further evangelistic services held nightly in a local Baptist church.

"We saw evangelistic results at every meeting held in the churches. People were converted every time. I consider this a tremendous success in light of the backward condition of many of the churches in Czechoslovakia," said Phil Roberts, associate professor of evangelism and church growth.

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"Czechoslovakia is one of the hardest countries in Eastern Europe for evangelism because of the strong atheistic and anti-religious residue left after communism. While communism failed economically and politically, it did meet with a measure of success in Czechoslovakia in terms of its anti-religious propaganda," he said, adding: "Prior to the communistic takeover, Czechoslovakia had one of the smallest evangelical Christian communities in eastern Europe. As a result, many in the churches feared total extinction under the communist system.

"At the same time the people of Czechoslovakia are looking for an authentic and real Christian faith, which I believe they experienced while we were with them. Many of the churches are small but have a very meaningful testimony."

One convert the group saw was their Czech translator. He accepted Christ during one of their evening meetings.

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Retirement means service,
not rest, for Carr Suter

By Ken Camp

N-EO
(Texas)

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DALLAS (BP)--After 40 years as a minister of education -- including 28 years at First Baptist Church of Garland, Texas -- Carr Suter is looking forward to early retirement.

But for Suter, retirement does not mean rest. It means doing what he knows and loves best where he is needed most.

Suter, age 62, plans to be a Southern Baptist Mission Service Corps volunteer in pioneer mission areas throughout North America.

"There are more ministers in our church alone than there are in some entire state fellowships in the north," he said.

"I've spent 28 years, not only in the heart of the Bible Belt, but right in the Southern Baptist Mecca. Here in Dallas and Tarrant Counties, we have more Baptist ministers per square foot than nearly anywhere. We're all bunched up here, not out there where the greatest needs are."

Suter retires from First Baptist Church of Garland Aug. 15. A week later, he will begin three years of volunteer service in Christian education "where the greatest needs are."

For two months, he will conduct Sunday school field work in the Twin Cities area of Minnesota under the supervision of Norman Wallace, director of church services for the Minnesota-Wisconsin Southern Baptist Convention.

From January to May 1991, Suter will teach three Christian education courses at the Portland, Ore., Center of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, and he will work with churches in the Northwest Baptist Convention.

Beginning in August 1991, and continuing until the following May, he will be educational director for the Cambrian Heights Church in Calgary, Alberta, teach at the Canadian Southern Baptist Seminary and do Sunday school field work.

Suter's wife, Janie, will continue to live in Garland for the next two years to complete 20 years as a public school teacher before her retirement. She then will join her husband for a year of volunteer service at the Northeast School of Ministry in New England.

Beyond the initial three-year plan, Suter hopes to work for up to 10 years as a Mission Service Corps volunteer in pioneer missions.

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A heart attack and bypass surgery in 1977-78 prompted Suter to reexamine his life and to seek out ways to be most effective in service during his retirement years. But his love for missions in general -- and pioneer missions in particular -- predates that experience.

As part of his ministry at First Baptist of Garland, he has worked with the congregation's missions committee to help start, relocate or revitalize at least a half-dozen missions and churches. He also has led mission trips to the Rio Grande, Ohio, Colorado, North Dakota, Canada, Australia and Japan.

On his 25th anniversary, First Baptist Church established the Carr and Janie Suter Pioneer Missions Fund. Earnings from the \$20,000 fund are used annually to fund special needs missions projects in pioneer areas, based on the recommendation of the church's missions committee.

In 28 years, Suter has seen Sunday school enrollment and attendance double at the church and has developed numerous weekday education ministries at the church.

"The greatest change I have seen is in the complexity of church programs. Things are not as simple as they used to be," he said, noting that First Baptist now has three Sunday schools and 11 ministers relating to various age groups.

"Also, there's greater competition for the time of people. It is not that they are less committed to Christ, but it is more difficult for them to find the time to express their faith and their commitment to the church."

In his 28 years at First Baptist Suter has served with two pastors: Charles Cockrell and Roger McDonald.

"I have never known a more humble man," said McDonald. "He seeks no honor or recognition for himself.

"He is my friend. I will sorely miss him as he leaves us to make a new investment of his life in a ministry that is dear to his heart."

A graduate of Vanderbilt University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Suter received an award last April for distinguished service in vocational religious education given by the faculty of the School of Religious Education, Southwestern Seminary. On Aug. 12, First Baptist Church and the city of Garland will observe "Carr Suter Day" following an official civic proclamation.

Suter has served on numerous committees with Dallas Baptist Association, has worked as associational director of Sunday school and served many years as associational Vacation Bible School director. In 1978, he wrote a history of Dallas Baptist Association, "O Zion, Haste." He recently completed a sequel, "No Greater Challenge," due to be published in October.

He also has written for various Southern Baptist Sunday School Board publications and has taught at Ridgecrest and Glorieta.

In the future, Suter hopes to interest Broadman in a book tracing the history of Southern Baptist Sunday school work.

"I like history. I like Sunday school. It seems like a natural for me to write," he said.

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Bridge building in churches depends
on tenure and trust, pastor contends

By Ken Camp

N-00
Suter

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DALLAS (BP)--Pastors must earn the trust of their churches and communities before they can build bridges across racial, cultural or economic chasms, according to Billy Ray Farmer, second vice president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

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"Stay there long enough for people to trust you," said Parmer, who has been pastor of First Baptist Church of Valley Mills for more than 20 years. "Some hotshot who only stays for two years won't be able to do much."

Parmer participated in a panel discussion on "Bridge Building" at the Bivocational and Smaller Membership Churches/Missions Ministers and Wives Conference recently at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, Belton, Texas.

"The 1990s will be a decade of change, confusion and choices, but it can be a decade of community if we are willing to reach across barriers," said Parmer, whose church includes black, Hispanic and Anglo members.

Richard Faling, moderator for the panel and director of the church ministries department of the BGCT, pointed to the increasing diversity of languages, cultures and races among the Texas population.

"Too often, our churches have been the last to bridge gaps between groups of people," Faling said, underscoring a theme that was echoed by other panelists.

"In recent years, we have seen much progress in race relations, but one of the areas where we have seen the least progress is among the people of God," said Howard Caver, pastor of World Missionary Baptist Church in Fort Worth.

Caver suggested churches learn about the traditions of other cultures and races, that church-sponsored athletic teams be integrated across congregational and racial lines, and that congregations pair visitors with church members to make them feel welcome, particularly when the visitors are of a different race.

"Love people into your congregation rather than refer them to churches of 'their own kind,'" he said.

Marcus Elizondo, pastor of Goodwill Baptist Church in Temple, Texas, and Ron Oliver, pastor of Keystone Baptist Church in Fort Worth, pointed out that persons of the same race or language do not always share the same culture. Country of origin and socio-economic background are more definitive than skin color, they noted.

Ruben Hernandez, Hispanic consultant for smaller membership churches and missions at the BGCT, encouraged church leaders to build bridges by learning about the cultural background of different groups and by learning at least a few phrases of different languages.

"Learn at least to approximate the pronunciation of a person's name," he said. "Names are important. The name represents the total person."

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Have vision for big people,
not big churches, Miller says

By Mark Wingfield

F-HMB

Baptist Press
8/1/90

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--God is more concerned with developing "big people" than big churches, Calvin Miller told a group of home missionaries.

Miller, author and pastor of Westside Baptist Church in Omaha, Neb., was the Bible study teacher during the annual home missions conference at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center. Many of the 1,871 people attending the conference work with small congregations, often in new work areas.

"I don't think God has called all of us here to build great big churches," Miller said. "The longer I live, I'm not sure church growth is the really big word God cares about. I think maybe the big word God cares about is 'big people.'"

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"Now, I'm not sure you find a lot of big people in little churches that are content to stay little. There are many of you who need a vision of a growing, dominating church because you're in cities that will support a great ministry.

"But some of you are great pastors, and you're in small towns that are locked away from big cities by vast areas of atmosphere," he added. "You're never going to be a big city. The possibility of ending up like Ed Young is pretty remote for you."

Miller said the pastor's task is the same whether serving a church the size of Second Baptist in Houston, as Young does, or a smaller congregation. "God is not particularly saying, 'big churches' or little churches.' What he's saying is, 'big people.'

He defined "big people" as those who look outside the church to the needs of the world. "Big people who live in little towns where big churches aren't a possibility will also learn to look outside their church," Miller explained.

He encouraged pastors to maintain a big vision to develop such people in their churches.

"Healthy vision always unites a people," he said. "Vision will always inspire enthusiasm."

Vision also inspires tenacity, Miller declared. "If you find out what God's will is for your life and you hang onto that tenaciously, you can be just about anything you want to be -- as long as you don't change your mind and pursue different courses."

Pastors who constantly move from one place to another will not develop big people, he said. "It is highly unlikely that the average 28-month stay of a Southern Baptist pastor fosters any great visions to be carried on over a lifetime in any one community. It is no wonder we seem dreamless to our people."

Miller told the missionaries: "Wherever God has put you, there is the place for a dominating kind of vision. You're only going to do God's service if you can see something beautiful God can do in your life where he has put you."