

# (BP)

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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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SBC Cooperative Program gifts  
down slightly; designated up

Baptist Press  
12/1/92

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program receipts for November were 3.84 percent below the same month a year ago but designated gifts increased 3.98 percent over the previous year, according to Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee.

November 1992 CP receipts totaled \$11,734,974 compared to November 1991 of \$12,204,115, according to Chapman. However, the November 1992 total is above the 1992-93 SBC monthly basic operating budget requirement of \$11,683,366. The 1992-93 SBC Cooperative Program allocation budget is \$140,200,395.

For the two months of the SBC fiscal year, October and November, the total CP gifts are \$22,565,020 compared to the same two months of the 1991-92 fiscal year of \$22,897,708, or a 1.45 percent decrease.

Continuing a trend, designated gifts for November 1992 reached \$2,384,109 compared to November 1991 of \$2,292,921. The year-to-date totals for the fiscal year are \$4,484,868 compared to last year of \$3,772,442, an 18.89 percent increase.

The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' method of supporting missions and ministry efforts of state and regional conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention. Designated contributions include the Lottie Moon Offering for Foreign Missions, the Annie Armstrong Offering for Home Missions, world hunger and other special gifts.

State and regional conventions retain a percentage of Cooperative Program contributions they receive from the churches to support work in their areas and send the remaining funds to the Executive Committee for national and international ministries. The percentage of distribution is at the discretion of each state or regional convention.

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EDITORS' NOTE: This story replaces the (BP) story titled "Parks to accept CBF post as missions coordinator," dated 11/30/92.

Parks accepts CBF post  
as missions coordinator

By Art Toalston

Baptist Press  
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ATLANTA (BP)--R. Keith Parks, retired president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, has accepted the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's offer to lead its fledgling missions program.

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Parks announced his acceptance of CBF's missions coordinator position in Nov. 30 news conference at CBF's headquarters in Atlanta.

The CBF is an organization of Baptist moderates formed in 1991 in protest of the current conservative direction of the Southern Baptist Convention. Parks retired Oct. 31 after 13 years as FMB president, saying he felt it to be God's will in light of differences with FMB trustees over missions philosophy.

He will assume the missions coordinator position Feb. 1, Parks told Baptist Press before leaving his home in Richmond, Va., to appear at the news conference in Atlanta. He will be responsible to the Global Missions Ministry Group of CBF's coordinating council.

"Despite all the denominational controversy that has gone on," Parks told Baptist Press, "there's no need for us (the SBC and CBF) to compete with each other. There's so much need in the world that there's room for everyone who wants to reach people for Jesus Christ. It's not my intention to stumble over others but to focus on needy areas."

Parks, addressing a Nov. 19-20 meeting with CBF's Global Missions Ministry Group in Nashville, said he would consider the offer to lead its missions efforts if it remains Southern Baptist, recruits new missionaries instead of just ones now related to the FMB and focuses on such missions needs as unreached peoples in the "World A" population belt from North Africa and the Middle East through China.

"CBF's missions committee has strongly affirmed all of those points, plus others I was interested in," Parks told Baptist Press. "Some may have a different opinion, but that's the kind of Baptist I am. CBF's purpose and strategy statement are very compatible with how I feel about missions ... 'to lead people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and to carry out the Great Commission through inclusive global missions in which all Baptists can participate.' That rings true to me and is why, after much spiritual struggle, I have felt led by God to do this."

Parks' decision, however, stirred a negative reaction from John Jackson, a California pastor who is chairman of FMB trustees. Jackson also issued a negative reaction to Parks' earlier meeting with the CBF, saying, "A gauntlet has been thrown in the face of the FMB and Southern Baptists."

"In addition to my former statements," Jackson told Baptist Press Nov. 30, "(Parks') decision comes at the heart of our time for commitment to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions. It appears it has been deliberately planned and orchestrated.

"I personally feel it attacks foreign missions as it is now in operation across the world," Jackson continued. "I believe this will devastate missionaries, pastors, (Southern Baptist) Convention leadership and Southern Baptists as a whole.

"I wish I could say something positive about it, but I cannot see this being a help to missions, but rather extremely harmful," Jackson said.

Larry Lewis, Home Mission Board president, issued a statement Nov. 30 voicing appreciation for Parks' 38 years in foreign missions but noting he is "extremely disappointed" in Parks' new CBF affiliation.

"I continue to be dismayed by former SBC agency leaders who make statements and take actions which erode support for our missionaries at home and abroad," Lewis said. SBC missionaries are "counting on our support" through the Cooperative Program fund for national and international SBC ministries and missions, the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions.

"Any actions that divert funds from these lifelines of support hurt Southern Baptist missions in general and our missionaries in particular," Lewis said.

Don Kammerdiener, FMB interim president, also issued a statement Nov. 30: "I can understand why the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship wants Keith Parks to head their world missions program. He's a talented man. However, my stance is the same that I have taken ever since I was 9 years old and especially during my 30-year career in Southern Baptist foreign missions. The best way for Southern Baptists to do foreign missions is through the Foreign Mission Board, which was created for that purpose. I encourage all Southern Baptists to unite around our heritage."

Parks, in the interview with Baptist Press, said many Southern Baptists will continue to give through the SBC's Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions and "I would pray blessings on them and never try to discourage them from doing that."

But Parks said his mail, phone calls and contacts have given him "a great concern for churches and individuals who have lost their enthusiasm and involvement in missions. My hope and prayer is that this effort by the Fellowship will mobilize them and be an additional source of income that will expand the witness that Southern Baptists have."

Asked about his support of a "societal" approach to missions after years of emphasizing a denomination-wide effort, Parks said, "The new generation is showing a growing lack of excitement about or commitment to the big denomination. We've seen it in the megachurches where they have tended to express themselves directly. I really believe there are trends toward a societal approach. It will challenge some people to get caught up in missions."

Parks said the 15th and 20th chapters of the New Testament Book of Acts played a role in his decision, in part because it reminded him and his wife, Helen Jean, "that Paul and Barnabas split up when they disagreed and had two missions teams instead of one. The Lord led us to understand that he could use this situation to create another missions team which could do more work than one could by itself."

Whether Parks' concerns for unmet global missions needs will fully be acted on by the CBF remains uncertain. During the Nov. 30 news conference, Jimmy Allen of Big Canoe, Ga., a former SBC president who now chairs CBF's missions committee, said the CBF's current five-year missions strategy includes a "European thrust," with some \$350,000 designated for the Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland, during the coming year.

Allen said "the fellowship has already laid out a strategy, and Dr. Parks came with his strategy, and it overlays." Parks did not directly address the Swiss seminary funding, which was cut by FMB trustees in the fall of 1991.

Parks said he will continue to reside in Richmond, Va., telling Baptist Press the location of his office will be determined later.

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Robert O'Brien, David Winfrey and James Dotson contributed to this report.  
(BP) photo available from The Christian Index, Georgia Baptists' newsjournal.

EDITORS' NOTE: In (BP) story titled "Parks to accept CBF post as missions coordinator," dated 11/30/92, please substitute the following paragraph for the story's fifth paragraph:

Parks said he has refused a financial package of \$100,000 including salary, benefits and annuity, the same provided CBF coordinator Cecil Sherman, and will receive the same yet-to-be-determined salary to be paid to CBF missionaries.

Thanks,  
Baptist Press

State leaders cite BREAKTHROUGH  
as factor in new growth trend By Frank Wm. White

Baptist Press  
12/1/92

CHICAGO (BP)--Illinois churches have reversed an 11-year decline in Sunday school enrollment, and participation in the Great Commission BREAKTHROUGH project will accelerate the new trend, according to Al Riddley, Sunday school director for the Illinois Baptist Convention.

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More than 100 Illinois churches are participating in Great Commission BREAKTHROUGH. Many of those are among the 500 churches in the state which are now growing, Riddley said.

As recently as 1989, 870 of the 1,000 churches in the state were declining or plateaued, he said.

In an effort to help 15 Chicago churches establish Bible study, worship and leadership frameworks for growth, a team of 15 volunteer Great Commission BREAKTHROUGH consultants from Mississippi began the project in the Chicago-area churches Nov. 13-16.

The project links a consultant with a church for a year to help the church implement its own plans for growth. The project begins with a weekend session in which the consultant assists church leaders in developing goals and plans to reach those goals.

With the Chicago project, partially funded by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, the consultants provided the weekend training while the Illinois Baptist Convention and Chicago Metro Baptist Association ASSISTeam (Associational Sunday School Improvement Support Team) members will provide ongoing consultation.

Some Chicago church leaders were eager to participate in Great Commission BREAKTHROUGH because of the success of previous Sunday school projects. After the Chicago Metro Enrollment/Training Clinic in 1990, University Park Baptist Church grew from 65 enrolled in Sunday school to the current 175, said Roger Jackson, pastor of the black suburban Chicago church.

"We're growing all because somebody came and told us about evangelism through the Sunday school," Jackson said.

The consultants represent a state with approximately 3 million people while the Chicago metropolitan area has more than three times that population, said Randy Tompkins, Sunday school consultant at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board and coordinator for the Chicago project.

Although apprehensive about how their deep-South roots would relate in the nation's third-largest metropolitan area, they found a variety of churches ranging from inner-city to suburban, Tompkins said.

The nine black churches and six predominantly white churches represented different worship experiences than many of the Mississippi Baptists were accustomed to, he said.

"Great Commission BREAKTHROUGH is a time when we as church leaders sit with lay folks in the church, dream dreams and come to some decisions for the church's direction and purpose," Tompkins said.

Tompkins said the project relies on the Great Commission of Christ as presented in Matthew 28:19-20 by focusing on going in the authority of Christ; making disciples; teaching them; and rejoicing in the fellowship of the Lord.

He pointed out that the consultants did not go to the Chicago churches with a prepared agenda. "We are not going to tell you what to do. We are going to help you decide what to do," Tompkins told church workers at the beginning of the weekend.

And, Tompkins believes the consultants -- all staff members in Mississippi churches -- returned home with more than souvenirs of Chicago.

"They had an awakening to different approaches to church," Tompkins said. "They have learned to appreciate many things we all take for granted. They saw churches that face challenges even to doing basic ministry."

He said the success of the project creates an openness for similar projects as outlets for mission involvement.

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

Mission Service Corps volunteer  
to represent Seminary Extension By Lesley S. Vance

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Seminary Extension has named Leon Boyd, a Home Mission Board Mission Service Corps volunteer, as its national consultant.

Boyd, director of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's town and country missions since 1987, will travel across the United States to inform Baptists of Seminary Extension programs and conduct training workshops for Seminary Extension center directors and teachers.

Boyd also will help associational directors of missions start new centers and recruit more Mission Service Corp Volunteers to represent Seminary Extension at the state Baptist conventions.

"Leon will be an asset to Seminary Extension," said its executive director, Doran McCarty, noting Boyd has the background necessary to represent Seminary Extension to Southern Baptists. At the Home Mission Board, Boyd also worked as associate director of the metro missions department, 1984-87.

Seminary Extension is an arm of the six Southern Baptist seminaries with about 1,500 students who take courses by correspondence and over 4,000 students who take courses at extension centers.

"Throughout my ministry," Boyd said, "there has been a growing awareness of the need for pastors and lay leaders to become involved in continuing education. The increasing diversity that is impacting churches makes it imperative that church leaders be equipped to respond in a positive manner and see diversity as a strength rather than a weakness.

"During the past eight years I have worked with directors of missions and associations in developing five-year mission strategies," Boyd said. "In most every situation a part of the strategy related to training church leaders. I feel Seminary Extension can be a significant response in addressing that need."