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-- BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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July 2, 1992

92-106

June Cooperative Program,
designated gifts up for SBC

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program total received by the Executive Committee for June rebounded with a 28.83 percent increase over the same month a year ago, according to Harold C. Bennett, Executive Committee president/treasurer.

The June 1992 total was \$12,789,989 compared to June 1991 of \$9,927,427. Designated gifts for the month were even higher, percentage wise, over the same period a year ago: \$13,127,622 compared to \$9,829,844 or a 33.55 percent increase.

After nine months of the SBC fiscal year (Oct. 1 to Sept. 30), the totals for CP were nearly identical to the same period a year ago: \$105,259,545 compared to the same nine months of 1990-91 of \$105,642,489 or a 0.36 percent decrease.

The monthly CP basic operating budget requirement for the SBC is \$11,725,856 or, for the nine month period, \$105,532,704.

Designated gifts for year-to-date were: \$118,729,203 for 1991-92 compared to \$116,913,821 for 1990-91 or a 1.55 percent increase.

Designated contributions include the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions, the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Mission, world hunger and other special gifts.

The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' method of supporting ministry and missions through state and regional conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention. 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.

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Quakes prompt ministries
by California Baptists

By Terry Barone

Baptist Press
7/2/92

FRESNO, Calif. (BP)--California Southern Baptists are responding to physical needs resulting from two violent earthquakes which shook southern California Sunday morning, June 28.

Early reports indicated minimal damage to Southern Baptist churches in Calvary-Arrowhead and Trinity Baptist associations, the closest associations to the center of the quakes and the hardest-hit areas.

The California Baptist Disaster Relief Unit was dispatched June 30 to Yucca Valley near the sight of the first and most powerful of the two temblors which registered 7.4 on the Richter scale.

Don Hargis, director of Men's Ministries for California Southern Baptists, said the Disaster Relief Unit was requested by the Red Cross, but it was not known what role it would play in the overall relief effort. Hargis said the Red Cross had requested fresh fruit and Baptists had donated 200 boxes.

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The Disaster Relief Unit, an 18-wheel tractor-trailer rig, is a self-contained, fully equipped field kitchen in which meals can be prepared if needed.

Hargis also said the unit could be used for grocery distribution since few grocery or convenience stores were open June 29 because of damage. The water supply to the area has been contaminated and the unit could be used as a distribution outlet for water.

"The Red Cross is doing a good job of meeting needs at this point but California Southern Baptists are prepared and ready to help in any way to meet needs and minister to the people of this desert area in Jesus' name," Hargis said.

First Baptist Church in Palm Desert has initiated a support group for persons dealing with anxiety as a result of the quakes. Pastor Jim Wilson said a psychologist member of the congregation is conducting the sessions "to help people cope with the trauma of these earthquakes and find peace through faith."

He said about a dozen attended the first session the evening of June 28. Other sessions are scheduled for Tuesday evenings.

Wilson said he hopes this type of outreach will "open lines of communication to the community and minister to people."

"This is just another way of giving a cup of cool water in the name of Jesus" and providing an opportunity for evangelism, he said.

Hugh Morgan, director of missions for Trinity Baptist Association, said, "Our churches have withstood everything thus far We've been fortunate none of our churches has sustained any significant damage. We are rejoicing and thanking the Lord there was not more damage, deaths or injuries."

Calvary-Arrowhead Baptist Association reported knowing of no church with major damage caused by the quakes, which hit about three hours and 20 miles apart.

Thomas Fowler, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Yucca Valley, about 10 miles from the epicenter of the quake, said, "We came out with the Lord's blessing. We had a few things tossed about inside but came out in wonderful condition."

Fowler reported that to his knowledge none his church members sustained major home or business damage due to the quakes.

California Baptist College in Riverside had cracked plaster and stucco at an apartment complex which houses married students. There also was some damage in the campus bookstore and coffee shop where stock fell off shelves.

All across Southern California, churches reported decreased attendance in both Sunday school and worship. At First Southern in Yucca Valley, Fowler said about 25 attended the Sunday morning worship service. About 115 normally attend.

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**Blacks, Koreans must work
in unity, pastors told**

By David Winfrey

Baptist Press
7/2/92

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Black and Korean Baptists must understand each other and fight together against societal injustice, the Home Mission Board's director of black church extension told a group of Korean pastors.

"Love transcends all colors," Willie McPherson told a dozen Korean Southern Baptist pastors during Home Missions Week at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

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The meeting was organized after riots destroyed several Korean-owned businesses in black communities in Los Angeles, said Daniel Moon, HMB assistant director of language church extension.

"We have what you call undeclared war between blacks and Koreans in America," he said.

McPherson said African Americans often resent Korean businesses making a profit in black communities without returning anything to the community.

"You know how long a dollar stays in the black community? Less than one day," he said.

Several Koreans agreed Korean stores in majority black communities do little for the neighborhoods from which they profit. Some even suggested it may be time for Korean businessmen to get out of black communities.

McPherson said it did not have to go that far.

"My Korean brothers who have been in the black community have to carefully let these people know that they love them and that they care for them."

Korean pastors expressed other observations, asking why blacks shoplift or do not work as diligently as Koreans who sometimes hire them.

McPherson said African Americans raised on welfare have lost hope for self-improvement. He also asked Koreans to guard against blanket statements concerning blacks.

"There are criminals out there who are black," he said. "But all black people are not like the people who mistreat you."

McPherson said African Americans have lost sight of the American dream.

"I sit every day and pray to God that America will be what it claims to be," he said. "The majority of black people are deprived of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness in America."

The Anglo population also can stay in power if minority groups are angry at each other, McPherson said.

"It's the old theory of divide and conquer," he said.

Moon and McPherson said many examples exist of Korean and black congregations getting together, including fellowship services or a minority church sponsoring a different minority congregation.

"However we can work together, we better do it," McPherson said. "The bottom line is winning people to Christ."

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Dealing with past called
key to solving problems

By Chip Alford

Baptist Press
7/2/92

NASHVILLE (BP)--Dysfunctional families often treat problems like an elephant living in their house, a Texas pastor said.

"They walk around it, clean up after it, but they never talk about it," said Tim Sledg, pastor of Kingsland Baptist Church in Katy, Texas.

While the "elephant" would be obvious to any visitors, the family simply ignores it, Sledge said.

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Discouraging open talk about obvious problems is one of six characteristics of dysfunctional families Sledge shared during a recent audio-taping session at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville.

The 12 messages he delivered on dysfunctional families and co-dependency are being packaged in six audio cassettes and sold as a companion piece to his new LIFE Support Course, "Making Peace With Your Past," scheduled for release Oct. 1 by the discipleship training department.

Other characteristics of dysfunctional families, Sledge said, include:

- focusing attention on an emotionally needy family member.
- placing limits on the expression of feelings.
- permitting destructive roles for the children.
- failing to provide appropriate nurture for children.
- remaining closed to the outside world.

Children from dysfunctional families learn to view feelings and emotions as "something to be controlled, not expressed," Sledge said. As a result, many later become involved in compulsive behaviors such as alcohol and drug abuse, sexual addictions, workaholism and perfectionism.

"They develop a strong need to be in control of people, events and feelings," he explained. Their compulsions become "a way of denying the pain -- a way of temporarily getting away from it."

Growing up in a dysfunctional family might be described as "growing up in a shame factory," said Sledge, who admitted he struggled with shame over his father's alcoholism.

Shame can lead to a fear of disclosure and close relationships with others, isolation and may eventually cause persons to commit shameful acts on their own.

So, how can people from dysfunctional families find healing?

The first step, Sledge said, is facing up to or "making peace" with one's past. Also vital is realizing the journey toward recovery cannot be made alone.

"God is the ultimate source of healing in this journey," he said.

Other suggestions he gives in "Making Peace With Your Past" include:

-- opening up about problems in Christian support groups and/or counseling sessions. "When you start talking about the problems of your childhood, you begin to get set free from the prison that shame builds," Sledge said.

-- examining one's heart-felt view of God. Ask questions like "Who is my God?" and "Who do I depend on?" Helpful Scriptures include Exodus 34:6, Nehemiah 9:17, Psalm 86:15, Zephaniah 3:17, Romans 5:5 and 1 John 4:8.

- turning to the Scriptures and prayer for spiritual cleansing.
- learning to live in the "here and now."

A good three-step recovery plan to keep in mind, Sledge said, is "1) I cannot; 2) God can; 3) I'm going to let him."

"Making Peace With Your Past" will be taught this summer during discipleship training leadership conferences at Glorieta (N.M.) and Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist conference centers. Copies of the LIFE Support course will be available at the conference center book stores.

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Author says Bible is source
for answers to kids' questions

By Chip Alford

Baptist Press
7/2/92

DALLAS (BP)--"How do I know God loves me?"

"Sometimes I feel ugly. How can I like myself the way God made me?"

"Does God really hear my prayers?"

According to author and lecturer Linda McGinn, these are just a few examples of the kind of questions children ask about God. And while most Christian parents are eager to provide helpful answers, many aren't sure how to explain the sometimes difficult concepts to their children, she said.

"Some adults just don't know how to relate to their children, to bring biblical concepts down to their level. And some just don't know the Bible very well themselves," said McGinn, a Presbyterian pastor's wife and mother of three.

"But it is so important that we, as Christian parents, provide clear and accurate information about who God is and how he cares for each and every one of us. If we can communicate God's love to our children at an early age, it is something they will carry with them for the rest of their lives."

McGinn was first approached about providing help to parents while leading a women's Bible study in North Carolina. After conducting research for several months, she compiled a list of the 40 most-asked questions children have about God and how he relates to their lives.

After dividing the questions into six categories -- questions about feelings, family and friends, actions, attitudes, faith and the person of God -- she began developing practical, easy-to-explain answers based on Scripture verses and biblical principles. The result was "The Bible Answers Questions Children Ask: A Resource for Caring Adults," released earlier this year by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's Broadman Press.

"I really wanted to write a book that parents could go to when their child asks a question they don't quite know how to answer," explained McGinn while attending the 1992 Christian Booksellers Association International Convention. "For each of the 40 questions raised in the book, I give an adult response, a list of applicable Scripture verses and the implications the issue being raised may have for older children."

Based on her research, McGinn said children most often ask questions related to their feelings.

"They want to know if they have worth and if God loves them. It all relates to their sense of self-esteem. It is so important that parents show and explain God's love to their children. That really provides a foundation they can build on for the rest of their lives."

When answering children's questions, McGinn said timing also is very important.

"If possible, spend time with them the moment they ask that question because they may never ask it again. If parents can stop and relate the Word of God to their children's life experiences as they happen, they will begin to see that God is actively participating in their everyday lives."

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When it isn't possible to provide an immediate answer, McGinn said parents should at least acknowledge the question and promise to talk later with the child about the issue.

Parents also should learn to be sensitive to the "question behind the question" sometimes asked by children, McGinn said.

"Sometimes a child is afraid to ask a question about a particular issue or they don't know how to verbalize what they are thinking, so they ask another related question. Determining what is really going on with your child requires taking time out to sit down and discuss issues. You really have to invest yourselves. Making the Bible real to them, that's what it's all about."

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Family ministries key to
church growth, speaker says

By David Winfrey

Baptist Press
7/2/92

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Many churches could grow 20 percent if they offered programs for husbands who do not attend with their wives, said a Southern Baptist speaker on families.

"Thirty-five percent of women in church are there without their husbands," said Harold Hime, associate director of the Home Mission Board's church and community ministries department.

Hime, who speaks nationally about biblically based families, led a conference at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center during Home Missions Week.

Many husbands stop attending church with their wives, Hime said, because pastors teach "materials that are good but not essential."

Meanwhile husbands "are wondering how they're going to keep their son out of jail or get their daughter through this pregnancy," he said.

The result: 42 percent of teen-agers drop out of church by age 14 if both parents do not attend, Hime said. "The parents say, in effect, that it isn't meaningful."

While evangelism is vital to churches, Hime added, families are the greatest mission field in the 1990s.

"The main purpose of the church is to equip families to live out the will of God."

Hime also questioned whether churches can adequately reach outside their doors until they have equipped their families. "We need to be sure that our church health is good before we invite people to come into it."

Furthermore, churches with strong families will be best at evangelism and visitation, Hime said.

"No church is any stronger than its families" he said. "If the church is really equipping families to live out the will of God, the visitation will pretty well take care of itself."

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Small churches must want
to grow, HMB speaker says

By David Winfrey

Baptist Press
7/2/92

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Small churches seeking to break the 100-member barrier must create a climate for growth, a Home Mission Board church growth specialist said.

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Such churches often plateau because they are unwilling to pay the price for further growth, Charles Chaney, Home Mission Board vice president for extension, said during a home missions conference at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

"We have churches today that are structured in a way that virtually makes growth impossible," he said. "It's important pastors understand that part of their role is to be change agents."

Churches, however, must be willing to accept change, Chaney said, adding change can be disturbing and can draw resistance.

Among changes necessary for growth, Chaney said, is a willingness to open opportunities for leadership and fellowship that have traditionally been dominated by long-time members.

Members also must be willing to be ministers instead of just expecting the preacher to meet all congregational needs, he said.

"We spend a lot of time at seminaries training people to do what laypeople need to do anyway," he said. "When the congregation is the minister, the growth potential grows."

After the conference, Chaney noted he has often been criticized as not caring about smaller churches.

"That simply isn't true," he said. "I don't think we can achieve our goals as a denomination without small churches."

Chaney said small churches must be affirmed because they often are more effective at evangelism and leadership training than larger churches.

Congregations of less than 50 people also have one of the highest rankings in per capita tithes and offerings, he added.

"You can't impact a culture without small congregations," he said. "If you don't have small churches that permeate all corners of a culture and a nation, your denomination's not going to grow."

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Christian author warns against
worldly methods in reaching lost

By Chip Alford

Baptist Press
7/2/92

DALLAS (BP)--The author of three of the country's best-selling Christian books says believers must be careful not to conform to the world in trying to make the gospel relevant to today's society.

Frank Peretti expressed concern over the "pop Christian culture" that has emerged in the United States the last few years in addressing a general session of the Christian Booksellers Association International Convention in Dallas June 29.

"We Christians are raising our kids and walking our walk in the middle of a culture that is immersed in distractions, entertainment, amusement and the 'feel-good' things," said Peretti, whose novel, "This Present Darkness," has sold more than 2 million copies. In seeking to present the gospel to a public with an ever-decreasing attention span, he said it is tempting for Christians to use "entertainment" or other worldly methods to reach the lost.

"The church looks at the world and says, 'We want to be relevant. What is the world doing?' Just once I'd like to hear the world say, 'Boy, I would like to do something really intelligent and effective. What's the church doing?'"

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While he isn't against using contemporary methods to reach non-believers, Peretti said Christians need to "put on the brakes every once in a while and ask, 'Why are we doing this? Are we letting the world set the standard for us?'"

Peretti first gained national attention in 1986 with the publication of "This Present Darkness," a novel focusing on spiritual warfare and the New Age Movement. The book remains on the Christian best-sellers list today. The follow-up, "Piercing the Darkness," also is a best-seller, as is his most recent book, "Prophet."

In "Prophet," Peretti takes on some difficult issues such as the clash over abortion and the influence of the media. But he said the major theme of the book is the characters' search for an answer to the question, "What is truth?"

Peretti said answers to that question won't come through "quick and easy" presentations of the gospel.

"I don't want to have God spoon-fed to me; I want to go after him myself," he said. "And I don't want a God who will entertain me; I want a God who is going to demand something from me, who will make a disciple out of me."

"I pray that we can raise our kids to know that God is worth serving even when it isn't fun, even when it isn't easy and even when it's a rough road. That's what discipleship really is."

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Sunday School Board publishers
introduce new products at CBA

By Chip Alford

Baptist Press
7/2/92

DALLAS (BP)--More than 12,000 people poured into the Dallas Convention Center June 28-July 2 as exhibitors at the 43rd Annual Christian Booksellers International Convention showed off the latest in Bibles, Christian books, music and gifts.

More than four miles of aisle carpet crisscrossed the 300,000-square-foot convention floor where Christian retailers visited 1,350 display booths to place orders, watch for new trends and glean ideas for store promotions.

One of the largest booths at the convention belonged to three publishers owned by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board -- Broadman Press, Holman Bible Publishers and Genevox Music Group. The group's contemporary marble-like booth sat on two 60-foot islands and took two days to put together, according to Randy Martin, marketing specialist for Holman.

Representatives staffing the booth's 19 sales desks met with a steady stream of bookstore buyers during the week and hundreds of other visitors stopped by to browse at the publishers' displays.

Several new products were introduced during the CBA convention.

Genevox released a trade version of the successful 1991 edition of The Baptist Hymnal. The "Christian Praise Hymnal" is designed to reach non-Southern Baptist markets and some SBC churches, according to Mark Blankenship, director of Genevox Music Group.

With the exception of the new title, a change in the inside divider pages and the addition of one song -- the Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's Messiah -- Blankenship said the trade version is identical to The Baptist Hymnal. That product already has sold more than 1.8 million copies after only a year and a half on the market.

Genevox also introduced three new Christmas musicals: "Adoration, In Search of a King" by Dennis and Nan Allen; "The Light of the World" by Stan Pethel; and "Bless That Wonderful Name" by Greg and Gail Skipper.

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Holman introduced the "Holman Bible Handbook," a companion to the "Holman Bible Dictionary" released last year. The 800-plus-page handbook, to be released in August, includes outlines and commentary on key biblical themes; a complete introduction to each Bible book; articles on Bible characters and places; surveys of doctrines, church history, Christian living and missions; hundreds of full-color illustrations; and other Bible helps. The handbook uses the New International Version text.

Broadman also introduced several new books to CBA members including "Satan's Whispers, Breaking the Lies That Bind" by Robert Don Hughes; "This Too Shall Pass, Being a Caregiver for the Elderly" by Ginny Sisk; "How to Get Along With Difficult People" by William J. Diehm; and "Faith, Taking God at His Word" by SBC immediate past President Morris Chapman.

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Language conference highlights
priority for ethnic ministries

By Frank Wm. White

Baptist Press
7/2/92

NASHVILLE (BP)--A conference for 11 ethnic groups next month in Orlando, Fla., will be the largest ethnic training event sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board and is part of the agency's new priority for ethnic work, according to conference planners.

In a denomination-wide cooperative effort, leaders from various Southern Baptist ethnic groups are promoting the National Language Church Development Conference at the Hyatt Orlando Convention Center Aug. 3-6 conference. "Their diligent work is having results with 20-40 registrations arriving daily," said Bill Banks, director of the board's special ministries department which includes language and ethnic work.

The largest ethnic conferences conducted by the board previously have ranged about 300-400 in attendance. Already, registration for the Orlando conference has exceeded that number, Banks said.

Final registration likely will go as high as 1,200, predicted Gene Mims, executive vice president for planning, research and denominational relations.

"This conference is part of the Sunday School Board's effort to place ethnic work as one of the major corporate priorities," Mims said.

The conference will be preceded by a Hispanic Baptist Fellowship meeting on Aug. 1-3. That meeting will help launch the church development conference, said Tito Fafasuli, manager of the Hispanic church development section.

Fafasuli said several new Spanish-language products will be introduced at the conference that have been developed based on listening sessions with Hispanic congregations.

The new products to be introduced include resource kits for preschool, children and adult Sunday school materials, DiscipleYouth materials, Parenting by Grace and Covenant Marriage materials and a Life course, "Step By Step Through the Old Testament."

Two products to be introduced, "The 24-Hour Counselor: Youth in Crisis," and "Quietud," a daily devotional guide, are written by Hispanic Baptists rather than translated from existing English language products, Fafasuli said.

"This conference will be a unique opportunity for many Hispanic Baptists to see these new materials for the first time," Fafasuli said.

In addition to Hispanic Baptists, the conference will offer sessions for deaf, American Indian, Haitian, Greek, Cambodian, Filipino, Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese and multiethnic in English.

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The conference offers Southern Baptists an opportunity to meet the challenge of reaching the more than 100 million ethnic persons in the United States, said Peter Kung, manager of the language church development/new work section of the special ministries department.

Registration of participants from Venezuela, Cuba, Mexico, Peru, Korea and Hong Kong gives the conference an international scope in addition to providing training for Southern Baptist ethnic workers in the United States, Banks said.

The registration fee for the conference is \$60 for adults, \$40 for youth including a Discipleship Youth Celebration, and \$35 for children. A special conference rate of \$69 per room is available from the Hyatt Orlando convention hotel.

Registration materials are available from the Special Ministries Department, #180, Baptist Sunday School Board, 127 Ninth Ave. N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234. Persons who do not register in advance may still register at the conference, Banks said.

A special language version will be available on SBCNet.

For additional information, contact the special ministries department at (615) 251-2702.

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Also available upon request:

-- Feature by Wayne Grinstead on a home missionary's efforts in inner-city Philadelphia to launch church-based ministries, with photo.