

The Cooperative Program

the Southern Baptist Way of Doing Missions

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5.8 billion

people on the planet are lost without Jesus.

EVERY NUMBER HAS A STORY

“I will seek the lost, bring back the strays, bandage the injured,
and strengthen the weak...” — Ezekiel 34:16a, HCSB



COOPERATIVE PROGRAM

Love In Action

www.sbc.net/cp

Special Section — Pullout



Cooperative Program

What Is the Cooperative Program?

HOW IT CAME ABOUT

In 1925, the leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) proposed a unified funding campaign that, for the first time, included everything—the missions and ministries of all the state conventions as well as that of the Southern Baptist Convention. A God-given partnership of missions support was conceived—the Cooperative Program. Prior to that time, each SBC entity made direct appeals to the churches. This method was referred to as the “societal” approach to missions and is common even today. This method, however, resulted in severe financial deficits, competition among entities, overlapping pledge campaigns, and frequent emergency appeals, which greatly hampered Southern Baptist mission efforts. Frequently, missionaries were delayed from going to the field or denied the opportunity altogether due to lack of funding.

The Southern Baptist Convention is a network of churches that have learned an important principle—we can do far more together than we could ever do separately. It is the concept of synergy found in Ecclesiastes 4, where it says, “Two are better than one.” If two are better than one, how much better would hundreds of churches working together be? Since its inception, the effectiveness of the Cooperative Program has been dependent upon individuals, churches, state conventions, and SBC entities cooperating, working toward a common goal of sharing the Gospel with every person on the planet.

The Southern Baptist worldwide missions enterprise is funded in large part through the unique, efficient, and equitable Cooperative Program. Each church determines a portion to invest in the Cooperative Program from the undesignated tithes and offerings received from individuals. In 2008, the churches of the SBC of Virginia invested over \$10 million through the Cooperative Program to support work throughout Virginia, Greater Washington, DC, and the various ministries of the Southern Baptist Convention.

HOW IT WORKS (adapted from www.cpmissions.org)

Simply put, it begins with each individual Southern Baptist. First of all, you give yourself to God (2 Corinthians 8:5). Next, out of gratitude and obedience to God for what He has done for you, you commit to give back to Him, through your church, a portion of what He provides. This is commonly called a tithe and represents ten percent of your income (Leviticus 27:30, Malachi 3:10).

Your church decides the next step. Every year, your church prayerfully decides how much of its undesignated gifts will be committed to reaching people in Virginia, Greater Washington, DC, and around the world through the Cooperative Program. If your church is an SBCV church, this amount is then forwarded to the SBCV. The SBCV gives fifty percent to support local missions and ministries, and the other fifty percent is forwarded to the Southern Baptist Convention for North American and international missions and ministries.

At the Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meetings, messengers from across the country decide how the gifts received from the states will be distributed among SBC entities. These gifts are used by Southern Baptist entities to send and support missionaries; train pastors and other ministry leaders; provide relief for retired ministers and widows; and address social, moral, and ethical concerns relating to our faith and families. The bottom line—people around the world hear the Gospel and receive Christ.





WHAT IT DOES

Cooperative Program investments through the SBCV work together to support a wide array of ministries and missions, including evangelism efforts, disaster relief responses, volunteer missions, new churches, and much more.

Following the original intention of the Cooperative Program funding model, all undesignated giving to the SBCV is divided equally between national Southern Baptist causes and Virginia Southern Baptist causes. The SBCV is a network of Southern Baptist churches cooperating together to help local congregations fulfill their task of the Great Commission. The SBCV lives out this evangelistic mandate in three ways:



EVANGELISM THROUGH MULTIPLYING CHURCHES—The primary focus of Multiplying Churches is church planting. The SBC of Virginia has been partnering with churches to plant churches since its beginning. It is a core value. To this end, your area SBCV church planting strategist is available to assist SBCV churches to plant other churches through a systematic approach, which has been proven to facilitate the planting of healthy, reproducing churches.



EVANGELISM THROUGH MATURING CHURCHES—Maturing Churches encompasses two strategic objectives: (1) supporting pastors, staff, and their families; and (2) strengthening existing churches. The purpose of the Maturing Churches strategy is to assist the local church in insuring good congregational health and to encourage steady growth. Church health strategists and associates are deployed throughout the state to work in close relationship with ministerial staff, lay leaders, and church members in providing resources, training events, and specialized equipping opportunities. The New Testament church had everything in common, shared their resources, increased in salvations, grew in their spiritual walk, and scattered in order to carry forth the Gospel. Even though the strategies and process may look different today, the message and the goal are the same—to be a healthy, growing, and maturing church.



EVANGELISM THROUGH MOBILIZING CHURCHES—Through Mobilizing Churches, the SBC of Virginia continues its endeavor to educate and mobilize church volunteers in SBC cooperative missions. To do this, we seek to network local church key leaders, utilize missions specialists to assist local churches, provide a missions webpage, develop missions partnerships among churches, and provide aid in disaster relief and Baptist Builders efforts. Churches are encouraged to embrace the Acts 1:8 Challenge by reaching their Jerusalem (community), Judea (Commonwealth), Samaria (country), and the ends of the earth (continents).

The other half of all Cooperative Program contributions to the SBCV go to support the Southern Baptist Convention:

- Through the International Mission Board (www.imb.org), Southern Baptists support over 5,000 missionaries, who are engaging more than one thousand different people groups around the world.
- Through the efforts of more than 5,000 North American missionaries, close to 1,500 new churches are planted each year. These efforts are coordinated through the North American Mission Board (www.namb.net) and individual state conventions.
- Six Southern Baptist seminaries (Southern, Southeastern, Midwestern, Southwestern, Golden Gate, and New Orleans) educate in excess of 16,000 pastors, missionaries, and future church leaders each year.
- The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (www.erc.com) is dedicated to addressing social, moral, and ethical concerns, with particular attention to their impact on American families and their faith. They also provide print resources that offer scriptural responses to the moral and ethical problems of our culture.

Although they receive no Cooperative Program support, LifeWay Christian Resources, GuideStone Financial Resources, and the Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) actively promote the Cooperative Program in publications and missions resources.

For more information concerning your missions investment through the SBCV, visit www.sbcv.org/budget.



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If “two are better than one” (Ecclesiastes 4:9), how much better are more than 16 million? This is the current membership in more than 44,696 Southern Baptist churches across the United States. With a global population exceeding 6.5 billion and a command to take the Gospel to every nation, we must enhance our cooperative efforts if we are going to fulfill Christ’s command.

To help the Cooperative Program reach its potential, would you please:

Pray.

Pray regularly for your Southern Baptist missionaries in your state and around the globe. “Pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers” Matthew 9:38 (HCSB).

Go.

Be involved in some sort of missions endeavor. Talk with your pastor about available opportunities. You are God’s missionary right where you live. “Go...and make disciples of all nations” Matthew 28:19 (HCSB).

Give.

Out of love for the Lord, give regularly to Him through your church. If you are not tithing, begin to do so, and also discover the blessings of giving beyond the tithe. Encourage your church to increase its participation in the Cooperative Program. “Since you excel in so many ways...now I want you to excel also in this gracious ministry of giving” 2 Corinthians 8:7 (NLT). “Bring all the tithes into the storehouse” Malachi 3:10 (NKJV).

Thank you for your love for the Lord, your love for people, and your participation in the Cooperative Program.

