



***Celebrating the
Cooperative Program's
Centennial in Missouri***



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Foreword:

A Message from Wes Fowler



The numbers are staggering. Over the past 100 years, Southern Baptists have invested more than \$20 billion through the Cooperative Program (CP) to reach the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Missouri Baptists have chipped in nearly four percent of that total amount – \$775 million – to fund a wide range of collaborative ministries.

But behind the numbers are compelling stories: young women rescued from human trafficking; unreached people groups hearing the gospel; disaster survivors receiving help, hope, and healing; and so much more.

Missouri Baptists joyfully join other Southern Baptists in giving sacrificially through CP because we believe the gospel and feel compelled to share it with others. And we know that our gifts – no matter how big or how small – enable us to own a stake in what God is doing across Missouri, throughout North America, and around the world.

For example, very few MBC-affiliated churches have the financial wherewithal to keep even one full-time Southern Baptist missionary on the field for a year. Yet, through CP, each church is helping thousands of International Mission Board and North American Mission Board missionaries answer God’s call to declare his message of hope to the nations.

When Missouri Baptists give to our local MBC-affiliated churches, and our churches share a portion of these gifts through CP, we realize how much more we can accomplish by working together.

The Cooperative Program is so much more than a funding mechanism. As Tony Wolfe and W. Madison Grace II write in *A Unity of Purpose*, “CP is a unifying

force for Great Commission advance – a conduit for voluntary, cooperative, and sacrificial investment from the churches to the nations.”

CP is the greatest unified missions-funding program the world has ever known between voluntarily associated autonomous churches. Or, as Wolfe and Grace note, “CP is the envy of other evangelical denominations. It is a past treasure, a present strength, and a future promise.”

Well said. Since the 2024 MBC Annual Meeting last October, we’ve been celebrating the 100th anniversary of CP, and we’ll conclude our celebration in Branson October 27-28 at this year’s annual gathering of Missouri Baptists. Over the last year, we’ve produced videos, bulletin inserts, commemorative items, web and social media campaigns, and more.

The small book you hold in your hands is a compilation of many of these items: a brief history of CP; an explanation of CP and how it works; feature stories; testimonials; infographics; brief histories of MBC-affiliated entities; and more. This book also is available in digital format at mobaptist.org/cp, and many of the entries are formatted as downloadable and printable bulletin inserts to share with your church.

I’m sure you’ll enjoy the stories, graphics, and detailed information about how the generous gifts of Missouri Baptists over the last 100 years have changed lives at home and around the world.

Thanks for your faithful stewardship. As Missouri Baptists, we may all be grateful to the Lord for taking our humble gifts and producing such a great harvest.



Wes Fowler
Executive Director-Treasurer
Missouri Baptist Convention

Celebrating CP's Centennial

Southern Baptists are celebrating the 100th anniversary of their partnership in missions giving, known as the Cooperative Program (CP). Missouri Baptists have been part of this audacious undertaking from the beginning, contributing nearly \$775 million to missions at the state, national, and international levels since 1925.

CP enables every giver and every church to make an impact for Christ at home and around the world. The Cooperative Program is the envy of the evangelical community for the efficient and effective way it enables 47,000 independent churches to work together to advance the gospel.

\$775 Million Given Since 1925

The Cooperative Program begins with you - your tithes and offerings to your local church. Your church, in turn, shares a portion of its annual income with the Cooperative Program, sending its CP gifts to the MBC, which distributes CP funds from more than 1,700 MBC-affiliated churches according to an approved plan.



This plan supports dozens of ministries in Missouri, across North America, and around the world.



Prayer & Evangelism



Church Planting & Renewal



Disaster Relief



Foster Care



Anti-trafficking Services



Ministries to the Aged



**North American &
International Missionaries**



Missions Mobilization



Retirement Benefits for Pastors



Training & Leadership Development

Thank you for your faithful giving to your church, and your church's generosity through CP. For 100 years, Missouri Baptists have demonstrated that we can do more together.

Reasons to Celebrate

Consider just a few ways Missouri Baptists have worked together for the sake of the gospel over the last 100 years, pooling our Cooperative Program gifts. We have:



Supported foster care, adoption care, rescue from human trafficking, and other ministries of the Missouri Baptist Children's Home.
(\$21 million)

Provided care for thousands of senior citizens, veterans, and others in need through Baptist Homes & Healthcare Ministries.
(\$9 million)



Offered higher education, rooted in a biblical worldview, to tens of thousands of students at Hannibal-LaGrange University, Missouri Baptist University, and Southwest Baptist University.
(\$140 million)

Baptized 1,371,396 new followers of Jesus in Missouri Baptist churches.





Sent more than \$280 million to the Southern Baptist Convention, which keeps thousands of full-time missionaries on the field; trains more than 15,000 next-generation leaders each year at six SBC seminaries; and gives Southern Baptists a voice in Washington through the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

(photo courtesy of IMB)

Provided a safety net for pastors and their families – retirement, disability and life insurance – through GuideStone’s Pastor Protection Program.
(more than \$10 million)



Helped church leaders and individuals be good stewards of their financial resources through the ministries of the Missouri Baptist Foundation.
(\$4.7 million)

Invested **\$260 million** to underwrite in-state ministries like disaster relief, church planting, evangelism and discipleship, collegiate ministries, hunger relief efforts, and so much more.



Ways to Celebrate

There are many ways you and your church can take part in the centennial celebration:

- **Attend the MBC Annual Meeting in 2025.** You'll see new videos, pick up complimentary commemorative items, witness special presentations, and gather CP resources for your church.
- **Learn more.** Browse the MBC's web pages (mobaptist.org/cp) for CP 100 stories, testimonials from Missouri Baptists, videos, histories, maps, links to free MBC and Southern Baptist Convention resources, and a whole lot more. Check back regularly throughout the year for updates and new features.
- **Share.** Distribute free printed CP resources at your church. Use your website, social media platforms, newsletters, and bulletins to tell the CP story. Share national and international missions stories from sbc.net/cpstories.
- **Stay current.** Read *The Pathway*, the MBC's news journal, and visit mbcpathway.com for news and feature stories about the centennial celebration.
- **Visit the SBC's CP 100 web pages** for news, information, and resources (sbc.net/cp100), and download free CP resources at sbc.net/cp.
- **Celebrate CP Month in October** by sharing videos, bulletin inserts, posters, and other resources from the MBC and SBC web pages. Invite a member of the MBC staff or a Missouri Baptist entity (Children's Home, for example) to speak at your church.
- **Consider increasing** your church's gifts to the Cooperative Program and extend your ministry reach across Missouri, throughout North America, and around the world.



“It has often comforted me to know the smallest church in the smallest association can have a part in worldwide mission advance due to the Cooperative Program. Southern Baptists are blessed to have this God-honoring way of giving to the Lord’s work.”

John Marshall

Retired Senior Pastor

Second Baptist Church, Springfield



Southern Baptists' Cooperative Spirit

How the Cooperative Program has Advanced Southern Baptists' Commitment to the Gospel for a Century

By Aaron Lumpkin

From the earliest days of the modern missions movement, Baptists have been a people committed to taking the gospel to their neighbors and the nations. And, to do this, Baptists have fostered a cooperative spirit, clinging to the adage, “We can do more together than we can apart.”

Early English Baptists worked together through local associations, and official denominational structures developed over time, particularly in the 19th century. Though the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) was born in 1845, the preceding Triennial Convention played a significant role in fostering a cooperative spirit among Baptists. The work of individuals like Adoniram and Ann Judson, Luther Rice, Thomas Baldwin, and Richard Furman helped advance the cooperation we know today.

After the formation of the SBC, messengers and leaders began forming various institutions to advance the spreading of the gospel, beginning with the Foreign Mission Board. As time progressed, the increasing need for support for the work of the SBC became even more apparent.

For a time, the entities sought to raise support through the “societal method.” Through this method, each entity held its own board that was responsible for the oversight of the ministry, including fundraising. This method did not prove sufficient for the SBC entities, resulting in budget shortages, unhelpful competition, and other challenges.

In the early 20th century, the Executive Committee was established to oversee the day-to-day operations of the convention’s annual meeting proceedings. With this shift to the “convention method,” the SBC was ready to pursue larger fundraising efforts, as the Executive Committee would oversee the programmatic approach to mission-driven fundraising and distribution.



Lee Rutland Scarborough led the SBC's Seventy-Five Million Campaign.

Courtesy of the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, Nashville, Tenn.

Shortly after the end of World War I, the leaders of the SBC proposed the Seventy-Five Million Campaign. Led by L. R. Scarborough, the SBC sought to raise \$75 million to fund its various entities and ministries, including home and foreign missions, state and associated missions, Christian education, orphanages, hospitals, ministerial relief, and famine relief.

During the campaign, Southern Baptists committed to giving \$92 million to their entities and ministries; however, the campaign only received \$58.5 million. In the 1925 SBC Annual Report, Scarborough conveyed, "All of us were disappointed in that these collections were not greater.... We are grateful that this sum represents a far greater sum of money raised than was ever raised during any similar period by our people for the kingdom of God."

Turning Point

While the goal was not achieved and some considered it a failure, the experience proved to be a turning point in the SBC's history. The SBC pursued a new fundraising strategy in light of the Seventy-Five Million Campaign.

During the 1925 annual meeting at Ellis Auditorium in Memphis, Tenn., messengers received a report from the Future Program Commission. This group reported and recommended that messengers adopt "The Co-Operative Program of Southern Baptists," remarking that "the only way of liquidating our debts and creating an adequate financial support of all our institutions and activities under God is to commit ourselves thoroughly to our Co-Operative Program, taking



Ellis Auditorium in Memphis, where the Cooperative Program was birthed. Courtesy of the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, Nashville, Tenn.

the nucleus of regular and systematic givers and the wholly or partially enlisted churches and the great body of the unenlisted members, and week by week and month by month, build them into a great and mighty host of never-failing supporters of Kingdom causes.”

The first budget was \$5 million, and states were encouraged to share their offerings with the Cooperative Program at a 50/50 split.

Scarborough later reported and invited Southern Baptists to “give ourselves in the fullest support to the Co-Operative Program as the best and most practical way of meeting our obligations and providing for the ongoing of all our enterprises. The hearty support of this Program by all our people will relieve our present embarrassments and provide for our future responsibilities.”

The messengers affirmed the formation of a unified budget for the entities and ministries of the SBC, now known as the Cooperative Program.

One hundred years ago, Scarborough longed for Southern Baptists to do more together for the sake of the kingdom of God. And we've done just that. Since forming the Cooperative Program, Southern Baptists have given more than \$20 billion toward kingdom causes, with Missouri Baptists contributing more than \$775 million of that total.

Lives have been and continue to be changed by the gospel of Jesus Christ. But it wouldn't have been a reality apart from the faithful sacrifices made by Southern Baptists, who continue to invest in kingdom ministries through the Cooperative Program.



Aaron Lumpkin serves as associate vice president for Spiritual Formation and assistant professor of Theology at Missouri Baptist University. He's also an elder at Church of the Redeemer in St. Louis.



When you give to your church, you bring **HELP, HOPE, AND HEALING** to survivors of natural and manmade disasters.

June 1 is the Missouri Baptist Convention's Disaster Relief Sunday.

Your church's generous gifts to the Cooperative Program (CP) support the work of Missouri Baptist Disaster Relief across our state and around the world.



Learn more at
mobaptist.org/cp.

CP is celebrating its 100th anniversary





***What Is
the
Cooperative
Program?***

How the Cooperative Program Works

When you give to your church, a portion goes to the Cooperative Program (CP), which advances the gospel in Missouri, across North America, and around the world. Here's how CP works, in three easy steps:

1

You give to your local Missouri Baptist church.

2

***Your church shares a portion through
the Cooperative Program.***

3

***The combined CP giving of 1,700 Missouri Baptist
churches supports ministries across our state,
throughout North America, and around the world.***

CP enables every giver and every local church to make an impact
for Christ.

Missouri Baptists and the Cooperative Program

What is the Cooperative Program?

The Cooperative Program (CP) is the funding process Southern Baptists have used since 1925 to support missions at the state, national, and international levels. Through CP, the ministry reach of your church extends around the world.

How does CP work?

The Cooperative Program begins with you – your tithes and offerings to your Missouri Baptist church. Your church, in turn, shares a portion of its annual budget with the Cooperative Program, sending its CP gifts to the Missouri Baptist Convention (MBC), which distributes CP funds from more than 1,700 MBC-affiliated churches according to an approved plan.

This plan supports dozens of ministries in Missouri, across North America, and around the world. Turn the page to see how each \$100 your church invests in CP helps churches transform lives and communities with the gospel.

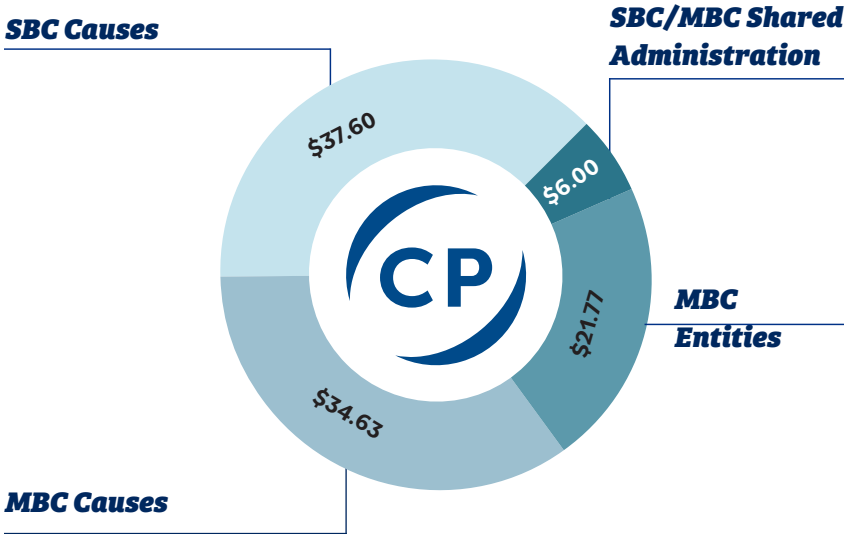
Why give through the Cooperative Program?

Your CP giving comes back to you – in training, events, resources, consultations, church-staff retirement and insurance benefits, and other ministries for the local church. In addition, CP supports evangelism and discipleship, missions mobilization, church planting and renewal, disaster relief, collegiate ministries, foster care and adoption, ministries to the aged, personal and church stewardship, Christian higher education, North American and international missionaries, ethics and religious liberty – and so much more.

The Cooperative Program enables every giver and every local church to make an impact for Christ at home and across the globe.

How Your Cooperative Program Dollars Are Invested

When your church gives through the Cooperative Program, here's how each \$100 helps churches transform lives and communities with the gospel:¹



Southern Baptist Causes

\$18.96	International Mission Board
\$8.57	North American Mission Board
\$8.33	Theological Education
\$0.62	Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission
\$1.12	Executive Committee

\$37.60

¹Based on approved 2025 budget.

Missouri Baptist Causes

\$5.77	Church Planting / SEND Missouri, Missions Mobilization, and Disaster Relief ²
\$4.14	Collegiate Ministries ²
\$3.27	Church Renewal, Resound Network, and Leader Care ²
\$2.40	Evangelism, Discipleship, and Prayer Ministries ²
\$3.47	Executive Office and Entity Relations
\$5.84	Financial Services, Annual Meeting, and Audit Services
\$2.66	Properties Management of Baptist Building, DR Readiness Center, BSUs, and Vehicles
\$3.13	Communications and Apologetics
\$3.95	Media, Technology, and Live-event Support

\$34.63

Missouri Baptist Entities

\$4.62	Missouri Baptist Children's Home
\$15.83	Christian Higher Education
\$0.66	Baptist Homes & Healthcare Ministries
\$0.66	Missouri Baptist Foundation

\$21.77

SBC/MBC Shared Administration

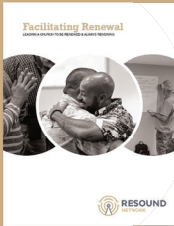
\$2.46	GuideStone Pastor Protection
\$2.54	The Pathway
\$1.00	Cooperative Program Promotion

\$6.00

² These ministries rely on supplemental funds from the North American Mission Board, the Rheubin L. South Missouri Missions Offering, and other designated gifts. Thus, their portions of the consolidated MBC budget are substantially larger than indicated here.



MAKING RENEWAL ACCESSIBLE FOR *EVERY* CHURCH



Explore the Resound Network's **Facilitating Renewal Guide**, and other **free resources**, online at resoundnetwork.com/resources



Your church's generous gifts to the Cooperative Program (CP) support church renewal through the Resound Network.

CP is celebrating its 100th anniversary. Learn more at mobaptist.org/cp100





Feature Stories



Taking it Personally

Missouri Baptist Pastors Support the Cooperative Program

By Matt Easter

For smaller churches, engaging in large-scale missions often seems out of reach. That's where the Cooperative Program (CP) provides much-needed leverage.



Kevin Sullivan

Kevin Sullivan, pastor of First Baptist Church of Owensville, Mo., believes CP is a special blessing to smaller churches that are limited in their capacity to do missions on their own.

“Cooperation is the best way to be most effective,” he states. Through CP, even the smallest churches can contribute to global mission efforts.



Buddy Perstroppe

Cooperation Also Benefits Larger Churches

Buddy Perstroppe, senior pastor of First Baptist Church of St. Charles, Mo., says CP offers a way for churches to “tithes back” for the benefit of cooperative ministries: Missouri Baptist universities, disaster-relief efforts, North American and international missionaries, ministries to orphans and widows, and much more.

No single church, no matter the size, could do all this alone. Cooperation opens the door to greater impact.

Education and Motivation Are Keys

How are pastors of CP-supporting churches motivating their members to give?



Milton Harrington

First, as Milton Harrington, pastor of First Baptist Church of Charleston, Mo., noted, any church that gives faithfully to the Cooperative Program is primarily motivated by strong gospel-centered preaching.

Second, pastors play a critical role in educating their congregations about CP. Education drives generosity.

Third, pastors remind their congregations of CP's value when it's time to take up the offering.

Sullivan mentions CP in his offertory prayers, helping members see their giving as an act of worship that contributes to missions and evangelism beyond the local church. This focus has borne fruit. FBC Owensville has increased its CP giving three times in the last 12 years, and the congregation's overall giving has risen by 30 percent.

Finally, pastors of CP-supporting churches make the impact of CP visible in personal ways. FBC St. Charles, for example, partners with IMB missionaries who are related to members of the church, giving the congregation a direct line to the gospel work being done overseas.

Similarly, churches can bring in speakers or student groups that highlight specific ministries supported by CP. By sharing stories from the field, inviting speakers who testify to the power of cooperation, and consistently emphasizing CP's role in missions, pastors are helping foster a culture of generosity and global awareness. The Cooperative Program is more than a budget line item. It's a lifeline for missions.



Matt Easter serves as director of Christian Studies and associate professor of Biblical Studies at Missouri Baptist University.

God's Heart for the Nations

A Former IMB Missionary Shares the Lord's Love of People All Over the World

By Mark Grossman

From Genesis to Revelation, we note two major themes: God's heart for the nations, and unity among God's people. The Cooperative Program (CP) brings these themes together. Southern Baptists are united for the purpose of joining God in his mission to reach the nations with the good news of Jesus.



I grew up at Parker Road Baptist Church in Florissant, Mo. It was a cooperating, mission-minded church. CP allowed me to have a front-row seat to observe what being on a mission with God looks like, and how CP provides the financial resources necessary for international mission work.

My youth pastor had spent two years as a journeyman in Mombasa, Kenya. I used to listen to his stories of missions in Africa with great admiration. Then, I was able to explore my call to missions as I was given the privilege to serve at Baptist High School in Mombasa, Kenya, through the International Mission Board's (IMB) journeyman program.

During that time, I fell in love with missions, teaching, evangelism, and Africans. My call to missions was confirmed. I couldn't wait to be a career missionary.

My wife, MJ (Journeygirl), and I went to the IMB's International Training Center and then language school in Kenya – both supported by Southern Baptist gifts to CP. MJ and I have a long list of mentors and role models who loved, helped, and nurtured us through many difficult days on the field. We are grateful to have lived our dream and spent 23 years of our lives joining God on mission to the nations.

We have learned that IMB missionaries have greater longevity on the field than those sent by other organizations. No doubt, this is due in great measure to the financial support of people from 47,000 Southern Baptist churches giving through CP. Praise God! Let's continue to lock arms together, joining God in his mission to bless the nations.



Mark Grossman is a former missionary with the International Mission Board. He currently serves as an adjunct professor at Missouri Baptist University.

A Passion for Planting Churches in Missouri

How a Meeting at Denny's Led to a New Ministry

By Mike Hubbard

Twenty years ago, I met MBC church planter Ben Hess at a Denny's restaurant in Eureka, Mo. My wife, Heidi, and I were wrestling with God's call to plant a church in this St. Louis suburb.



Church Planter Ben Hess

We were connecting with dechurched people – those who have left a church or become disengaged from organized religion – in Eureka due to Heidi's role as an elementary school teacher in our community.

We had a burden for these people and a desire to plant a church that would give them a safe place to explore faith and encounter Jesus. We also had zeal – and a small team of people willing to join the adventure.

What we didn't have was experience, or really any concept of what it meant and what it would take to plant a church.

That's where Ben came to our rescue, bringing much-needed experience to the table. He previously served as a missionary with the Southern Baptist Convention's International Mission Board (IMB), planting churches in Africa.

He had a passion for seeing churches planted everywhere in Missouri. And he helped us start Genesis Church 18 years ago.

For us, Ben was the face of the Cooperative Program, showing us how gifts from Missouri Baptist churches supported missions at home and across the world. He invested in our lives and helped us think through the pitfalls and struggles of church planting.

He led our team through training that helped us prepare to plant a church, taught us how to build systems, and equipped us to raise funds for this important work. Ben also helped us connect with the North American Mission Board's (NAMB's) Send Network so we could receive start-up funds and the regular monthly support. These came from gifts given through the Cooperative Program, money that helped us launch Genesis Church and provided part of my salary for a couple of years.

It is my joy to lead our church to give to CP, knowing that every dollar we give goes directly to gospel ministry around the world, including the work of church planting through the MBC, NAMB's Send Network, and the IMB.

What I learned then and continue to see is that the Cooperative Program is about so much more than funds. The faithful giving of Southern Baptists provides church planters with a genuine partnership that will support them and provide meaningful relationships throughout the church-planting process.



Mike Hubbard serves as pastor of Genesis Church in Eureka, Mo. He's also an adjunct professor at Missouri Baptist University in St. Louis.

Sharing Christ With College Students

Two MBU Staff Members Share Testimonies of Transformed Lives on Campus

By Aaron Lumpkin and Emily Ramage

God is doing amazing things at Missouri Baptist University (MBU), transforming lives and opening students' hearts to the truth of the gospel. We're privileged to witness first-hand the power of the gospel, knowing that MBU's collegiate ministry would not be possible apart from the generous support we receive through the Cooperative Program.

Not too long ago, a young man from London, England, arrived on campus as an outspoken atheist. He questioned the historical evidence for the resurrection of Jesus. Over several months, he built a relationship with team members of the Spiritual Life Office.

One day during chapel services, after hearing God's Word, he repented and believed the gospel. God transformed his life and now he is back in London witnessing to his family and friends.

Now, consider the story of a young man from Venezuela who came to play baseball at MBU. He arrived on campus having spent much of his life practicing another religion, but here God revealed himself to this young man. He trusted in Christ and was baptized in a local church.

I (Emily) am reminded of a young lady on campus who approached me about her doubts and confessed a calloused heart toward God. As we met and studied God's Word, I witnessed her eyes open to the love and freedom that God provides in Jesus Christ. She got plugged into a local church, gave her life to Christ, was baptized, and is now a chaplain on her sports team. Out of her obedience, three other girls on her team have begun to seek Jesus.

While we're seeing individuals come to faith on our campus, we're also seeing the gospel transform groups of people. In the Spring of 2024, a staff member baptized the head coach of our wrestling team. And, over the past year, we've witnessed what could only be described as a revival.

Many team members have come to faith in Jesus, and they now gather weekly to dive into God's Word, led by their two student chaplains. Their commitment to Christ is inspiring, and their influence on campus is spreading beyond the wrestling mats, encouraging other athletes to take similar steps.

God is at work, changing lives in every corner of MBU, from the classroom to the court, from the coffee shop to the chapel. These students' stories reflect a larger story of transformation that we're witnessing every day. It's humbling to see, and we're committed to supporting this movement of faith that God has so graciously begun on our campus. And we rejoice and give thanks to God for Missouri Baptists who give through the Cooperative Program, which makes so much of our work possible.



Aaron Lumpkin serves as associate vice president for Spiritual Formation and assistant professor of Theology at MBU.

Emily Ramage serves as Women's Discipleship coordinator.

Missouri Baptist Disaster Relief

A DR Summer Intern Shares Her Story

By Shelly Ryan

As a student at Missouri Baptist University and a volunteer with Missouri Baptist Disaster Relief (MODR), I've had the privilege of seeing Cooperative Program funds at work.

***“Disaster relief can be an exhausting ministry,
but it leaves behind a unique impact
on its recipients....”***

For the past two summers, I've participated in MODR's college internship. Beginning as something I had never even heard of, MODR has now become a part of my identity and a major contributor to my decision to work in disaster relief after college. Disaster relief can be an exhausting ministry, but it leaves behind a unique impact on its recipients as it can be quite personal.

Two summers ago, we were in the St. Louis area repairing homes with flood damage. We were hard at work installing drywall and molding in an older woman's basement.

That basement had a sad story. Her oldest son, who had been very sick, had lived there. Shortly after his death, this room – and its memories – were ruined by flooding.





The memories were so powerful for this woman that she had begun taking her laundry to a laundromat instead of using her washer and dryer located in the basement.

For her, our joy in serving transformed that part of her house into a space she could use and enjoy again. She cooked for us, showed us the art she collected, and talked about her family.

I'm thankful this homeowner trusted us to work on her home and that she had the courage to tell us her story. It's one of many, and it's made possible through faithful Christians committed to gospel ministry and to giving to the Cooperative Program.



Shelly Ryan (right) is a senior at Missouri Baptist University, pursuing a degree in communications.

Here, she takes a break during a DR callout in southeastern Missouri with intern Bethany Waggoner.

Missouri Baptist Children's Home

Our God Is Truly a Good Father

By Eric Turner

The Missouri Baptist Children's Home (MBCH) has been providing care and meeting needs for children, youth, and families since 1886. What began as a dream of several ladies from five Baptist churches has become a life-changing ministry for many, including me.

I was an orphan, briefly, but I was adopted through the Missouri Baptist Children's Home.

Adoption was always a celebrated part of my identity. My parents talked about it positively and even celebrated what they called my Special Birthday. In adoptive terminology today, we call this Gotcha Day, the day an adopted child is officially united with his or her adoptive family.

“What began as a dream of several ladies from five Baptist churches has become a life-changing ministry for many, including me.”

Adoptions can either be closed or open. Closed adoptions occur when the biological mother makes the decision to have no contact with the child once he or she is adopted. Open adoptions are, of course, the opposite. My adoption was a closed one.

In 2016, Missouri ceased its practice of closed adoptions, allowing adoptees, like me, to access their birth records. Adoption is about identity, and my story ends (or begins) with meeting my biological brother and sister.

The generous support of the MBCH by Missouri Baptists through the Cooperative Program led to 1,909 children, youth, and families, and 337 mothers and babies being served in 2023. Four cents of every dollar your church sends to the Cooperative Program helps support the life change that I experienced. And it's all part of God's plan. Our God is truly a good Father.



Eric Turner serves at Hannibal-LaGrange University as chair of the Division of Humanities and Fine Arts; chair of the Christian Studies Department; associate professor of New Testament and Greek; and director of Church and Denominational Relations.

Baptist Homes & Healthcare Ministries

Christlike Care for More Than a Century

By Matt Easter

The mission of Baptist Homes & Healthcare Ministries is to provide Christlike care, education, and advocacy for the aging, all for the glory of God. This has been the mission for over 110 years, even before receiving Cooperative Program support.

Founded by Dr. Milford Riggs, the Missouri Home for Aged Baptists in Ironton opened on May 6, 1913, with its first resident: 68-year-old Reverend J. P. Griffith from Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church.

Over the next century, this small Baptist Home with three residents grew to eight locations across the state, serving both the church and surrounding communities as Baptist Homes & Healthcare Ministries.

Baptist Homes has a big mission, but it's also personal, touching the lives of everyday Baptists like me. My great-grandparents, Henry and Thelma Jones, both lived their final years at the Arcadia Valley location. Nothing in my extensive Baptist experience has moved me in the same way as the Christlike care my beloved grandparents received at the Baptist Home there.



***Matt Easter (back right) with
grandmother Thelma Jones,
surrounded by family.***

***“.. Christlike care that pleases God,
minimizes fear, and maximizes peace of
mind for residents.”***

Missouri Baptists can support Baptist Homes by giving, volunteering, and praying. Baptist Homes currently receives nearly \$100,000 annually from the Cooperative Program giving of MBC-affiliated churches. As you give to your church, serve the aged, and pray, you can be proud of supporting Baptist Homes in its promise to provide Christlike care that pleases God, minimizes fear, and maximizes peace of mind for the residents.



*Matt Easter serves as director of
Christian Studies and associate
professor of Biblical Studies at
Missouri Baptist University.*

WMU and the Cooperative Program

The Woman’s Missionary Union Turns 101 as CP Celebrates its 100th Anniversary

By Jadynd Sanderson

As the Cooperative Program celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2025, the Missouri Woman’s Missionary Union (WMU) celebrated its 100th anniversary at its annual convention last April.

While WMU is arguably best known for its missions discipleship curriculum and promotion of missions offerings, it has many equally valuable and lesser-known ministries.

One is “Pure Water Pure Love,” which provides water filters for missionaries and the people they serve.

Another WMU initiative, WorldCrafts, provides men and women in poverty with an opportunity to make money in a dignified way. This ministry partners with artisan groups in the U.S. and around the world to sell beautiful hand-crafted work.

But perhaps WMU’s best-kept secret, according to former executive director Cheryl Stahlman, is its leadership development courses, called the Christian Women’s Leadership Center. Each course, for only \$30, offers 30 lessons, which include instruction on women’s mission history.



Cheryl Stahlman

The Cooperative Program (CP) plays a significant role in WMU’s missions, according to Stahlman. “Everything we do takes a lot of prayer from everybody, and a lot of faithful giving.”

Because of funding provided by CP, Missouri WMU has been able to serve many churches and individuals in Missouri and across the globe.

The work of WMU in Missouri and at the national level truly fulfills the Great Commission and Christ’s command to love our neighbors. Its compassion ministries meet the practical needs of families in poverty, while also providing opportunities for them to hear the gospel.

WMU’s missions discipleship resources given to churches are key to raising up the next generation of missionaries, said Stahlman. With continued funding from the Cooperative Program, WMU has a strong future ahead and will carry on its unique ministries.



Jady Sanderson is a senior at Missouri Baptist University, majoring in Christian Ministry. She was raised in O’Fallon, Mo., but her family now lives in Toronto.

A Century of Cooperative Giving

The gifts of your Missouri Baptist church to the Cooperative Program have accomplished much over the last century. Through CP, Missouri Baptists since 1925 have contributed \$774,644,749 to dozens of ministries, including:



\$280,980,736

Southern Baptist Causes:

- International Mission Board
- North American Mission Board
- Six SBC Seminaries
- Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission
- SBC Executive Committee



\$259,290,004

Missouri Baptist Causes:

Direct ministries of the MBC staff such as:

- Evangelism
- Disaster Relief
- Missions Mobilization
- Church Health
- Church Planting
- Collegiate Ministries



\$139,889,666

Christian Higher Education:

- Hannibal-LaGrange University
- Missouri Baptist University
- Southwest Baptist University
- William Jewell College
(No longer affiliated)



\$39,752,768

*The Pathway and Pastor Protection:
News Journal and Insurance / Retirement*



\$4,731,937

The Missouri Baptist Foundation



\$9,097,488

Baptist Homes & Healthcare Ministries



\$20,748,846

*Missouri Baptist Children's Home:
Millions more given through the Missouri Missions Offering*



In addition, did you know that Missouri Baptist churches reported 1,368,409 baptisms from 1925-2024? The reach of the Cooperative Program reflects the strength of our churches.

"WHEN YOU GIVE TO YOUR CHURCH, YOU'RE TRUE TO OUR SCHOOLS."



Autumn McKee
Senior / Web Systems & Design
Pleasant Hope, MO
Southwest Baptist University



Jordan Walker-Wright
Junior / General Studies
Ferguson, MO
Missouri Baptist University



Brenden Meinhardt
Sophomore / Christian Studies
Annapolis, MO
Hannibal-LaGrange University

Your Missouri Baptist church sends a portion of its budget to the Cooperative Program, which helps students like Autumn, Jordan, and Brenden prepare for their careers with a Christian worldview.

Learn more about Missouri's CP-supported Southern Baptist universities at sbuniv.edu, mobap.edu, and hlg.edu.

Discover how your gifts help others in Missouri, across North America, and around the world at mobaptist.org/cp.

Pray for new and returning students!



This Cooperative Program ad appeared in The Pathway in 2024.



***Show Me CP:
Testimonials from
Missouri Baptists***

John Marshall

As I gaze down the corridor of 57 years of ministry, I see in the beginning days many things that helped me start right. I see my preacher-dad, Mom, friends, a country-church ordination, a small-town church wedding, and the Cooperative Program.

Yes, the Cooperative Program. Without it, I would not be where I am today.

I had already been preaching two years before I started college, but my preacher-dad urged me not to pursue a religious degree. He said if the ministry did not work out well for me, a secular degree would provide me a career on which to fall back.

So, I earned a math degree – and never used it.

After college, my dear wife, Ruth, and I decided to go to seminary. We had no money. Like most young ministry-oriented couples in the early 1970s, we were love-rich and cash-poor. The cost of seminary was prohibitive everywhere, with one major exception: the six Southern Baptist seminaries spread across the U.S. from North Carolina to California.

Due to generous contributions from Southern Baptists to their local churches and then shared through the Cooperative Program, a Southern Baptist church member like me could readily afford tuition at one of these seminaries. Had it not been for the Cooperative Program, Ruth and I remain convinced we would have never been able to attend seminary.

At New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (NOBTS), I earned a master's degree and a doctorate. The knowledge I gleaned at NOBTS provided the solid educational background I needed to do what God called me to do over the next half-century.

Another benefit over the years was the way the Cooperative Program allowed our regular church offerings to include money for the SBC's North American Mission Board and International Mission Board. My dear church people always knew a portion of every dollar they gave was being invested in winning the lost in our nation and around the world.

It has often comforted me to know the smallest church in the smallest association can have a part in worldwide mission advance due to the Cooperative Program. Other causes right here in Missouri also benefit by our gifts to the Cooperative Program: Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, three Baptist universities, the Missouri Baptist Children's Home, Baptist Homes & Healthcare Ministries, the Missouri Baptist Foundation, church planting, disaster relief ... and on the list goes.

From the beginning of my ministry, and continuing to this very day, the Cooperative Program has been a wonderful contribution to my ministry. Southern Baptists are blessed to have this God-honoring way of giving to the Lord's work.



John Marshall served for 22 years as senior pastor of Second Baptist Church in Springfield. During his tenure, Second Baptist was annually the highest contributing church in Missouri to the Cooperative Program and one of the state leaders in baptisms. In addition, during his last seven years at Second, the church gave \$2.6 million to church planting and started 51 churches.

Marshall served as president of the Missouri Baptist Convention in 2010-2011, and in 2011 Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary named him Honorary Alumnus of the Year. He continues to serve Missouri Baptists and their entities in a variety of ways: as a board member, interim pastor, guest speaker, and encourager through john316marshall.com.

Andy Chambers

Cooperative Program ministries have blessed me my entire life. Raised in a Missouri Baptist church, I learned at an early age that Baptists can accomplish more when we work together than when we work as individuals or as isolated churches.

Growing up, I was taught that when churches commit to regular giving through the Cooperative Program, it enables kingdom ministries – like our three Missouri Baptist universities – to plan for and carry out their missions more effectively. In doing so, our missionaries can focus on their primary task: reaching, making, and equipping disciples around the world.

For me, the biggest blessing I have experienced through the Cooperative Program is the way it helped me afford to go to seminary.

I grew up in a middle-class home. My brother, sister, and I all took out student loans for college and graduate school. The three of us were fortunate to attend Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary – one of six Southern Baptist seminaries CP supports – at the same time.

What we didn't yet understand was just how important those Cooperative Program gifts were. The faithful giving of Southern Baptists allowed us to experience reduced tuition costs. I praise God that Southern Baptists, and especially faithful Missouri Baptists, gave and continue to give to the Cooperative Program. CP enables SBC seminaries to offset operating expenses and further help our students be equipped for gospel ministry, leaving with limited or no debt.

Today, I work at Missouri Baptist University, a Missouri Baptist Convention ministry supported by Cooperative Program gifts from more than 1,700 local churches. Every day, I get to see firsthand how CP gifts support our work at MBU and help make it more affordable for students.

Forty years into vocational ministry, I am still grateful.



Andy Chambers is provost, professor of Biblical Studies, and senior vice president for Academic Affairs at Missouri Baptist University.

Gary and Carolyn Miller

Many people ask us why we support the Cooperative Program (CP), as well as the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, when we speak at churches. We always explain that the CP funds our support network, functioning behind the scenes and undergirding all of the ministry activity.

Our appreciation for the Cooperative Program goes back many years – long before we were sent out by the International Mission Board. Both of us were raised in strong Christian families and spent our formative years in SBC churches that were active in local associational missions, as well as state and national work. We enjoyed taking part in children’s and youth mission activities and got to meet missionaries at church camps.

All these activities, as well as the Southern Baptist schools from which we received our degrees, receive support from Cooperative Program funds. Together, all these opportunities have impacted who we are today as we serve from our home base in Debrecen, Hungary.

As IMB missionaries, we are proud to say that the Cooperative Program covers the administrative expenses of our mission board, so that all of the annual missions offerings can go directly to overseas support of missionaries and their work. How many other mission organizations can say that?

Most missionaries need to raise their own personal support as well as funds for the administration needed to keep them on the field. What a blessing it is when we speak in churches to be able to share about God at work around the world, and how we as workers in the field are supported by the unified giving programs of the SBC. Through the loving cooperation of the churches, large and small, we are allowed to stay focused on the main task of sharing the gospel with the nations.

It is the goal of sharing Christ with every person on the planet that keeps the Cooperative Program as relevant today as it was when it started a century ago.

We're thankful that Southern Baptist churches have unified their national giving program to make sure that needs are addressed everywhere, including U.S. towns, counties, and associations, as well as national and international missions. It is through this combining of individual efforts that each person in our churches can have local, national, and international impact.

Isn't it amazing? Every Southern Baptist's giving can touch others with the gospel, starting at their own door, and, through the Cooperative Program, extend around the world. Working together, we can continue being witnesses for Christ in our cities, counties, states, nation, and to the ends of the earth.



Gary and Carolyn Miller are Missouri Baptists who minister to European Peoples through the International Mission Board (IMB).

Cheryl Stahlman

My husband and I didn't grow up in a Southern Baptist church. As a newly married young woman, I was invited to attend a local church in my community by my husband's family. It was in that church that we were taught what it truly means to live as Christians.

Despite being saved as teenagers, my husband and I weren't disciplined in the ways of the Christian life. We still lived for ourselves. Our lives, from the outside, looked the same. But on the inside, we could feel that something was missing.

Soon, the Lord called my husband to be a pastor. Our lives were enriched by this experience. During our time in the ministry, we have had four amazing children. What a wonderful privilege it has been to be able to raise our children in the church!

Through the fair ministry in our local association, our family was blessed. Through the training my husband was provided in sharing the gospel soccer ball, our oldest daughter accepted Christ as her Savior while he practiced the presentation. It was also through this same soccer ball that our third child, at 13, shared the gospel in front of a crowd for the first time while on a mission trip to Wisconsin with our association. He has since shared several times at block parties for our church and even taught other students his age how to do the presentation through our local homeschool group.

Over the years, my husband has had the blessing of baptizing all four of our children. To watch them serve the Lord alongside us has been exciting. It is through the cooperative work of all Southern Baptists that real missions take shape: evangelism training, fair ministry, mission trips, summer camps, block parties, missions education, discipleship, and so much more.

It's through these efforts that my husband and I have been able to guide our children to serve the Lord, watch them share the gospel with others, and minister to younger children at camp. Two of our children have expressed the desire to go into missions or ministry in the future.

Until a recent call of God to Montana, my husband served as a bivocational pastor at a small, rural church outside of Union, Mo. It's there that our family served alongside one another - preaching, teaching, leading worship, taking up offerings, and leading in prayer. And it's through the Cooperative Program that our small church was able to extend its ministry beyond the borders of our community, advancing Christ's kingdom through CP-supported ministries like the Children's Home, Baptist Homes, and the International Mission Board.

We are grateful for the way Missouri Baptists work together, through CP, for the sake of the gospel.



Cheryl Stahlman has served as executive director of Missouri WMU (Woman's Missionary Union). She's founder and coordinator of the I Am God Designed Conference, as well as a sought-after Christian women's speaker. She's also a pastor's wife, mother of four children, and homeschool teacher.

Juston Gates

Having attended Southern Baptist churches all my life, I remember my childhood and Vacation Bible School (VBS). VBS meant summer, cookies, Kool Aid, and friends, especially in a rural community like ours in northern Mississippi.

Yet, VBS also meant Bible story flannel graphs, explained carefully by the devoted ladies that volunteered their time for VBS to reach children with the gospel. One of those stories still stands out vividly in my mind – the story of Lottie Moon and her missionary journey to China.

I can still picture the flannel graph character of the valiant missionary, standing much lower to the other characters in the story, for Lottie wasn't very tall. Yet, she appeared to me like David standing against Goliath, for I couldn't imagine being away from my rural home and living in China for the express purpose of sharing the gospel.

To the credit of those devoted ladies at VBS, the story didn't simply focus on the heroics of Lottie Moon and her unique calling. It included an explanation of how Southern Baptist missionaries who followed Lottie were able to get to the mission field at all. In that VBS setting, I learned about the Cooperative Program, launched more than a decade after Lottie's death. I learned how churches voluntarily combine their resources to glorify Christ with a more effective means of propagating the gospel message.

Although I then possessed a basic understanding of the Cooperative Program, it wasn't until much later in life that I personally experienced the full benefits of this genius funding mechanism. After two years of teaching high school biology and coaching two sports, I became a law enforcement officer. And then, after 11 years, I heard God's call into pastoral ministry.

There was just one problem: I had no formal training that would qualify me for such a role. Serving as senior pastor of a rural church in west Tennessee, I found myself needing theological training but facing a challenge to afford it.

That's when I discovered that members of Southern Baptist churches that support the Cooperative Program could attend one of the six SBC seminaries for half the cost that non-members paid for tuition. With that discount, and the help of my local SBC church, I was able to successfully complete my Master of Divinity degree from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 2004.

My "Lottie Moon" journey is not yet complete, but I can say that I owe, to some degree, what I have accomplished so far to Southern Baptists' faithful gifts to the Cooperative Program.



Juston Gates serves as president of the Missouri Baptist Children's Home. Prior to beginning this assignment in 2024, Gates served as a pastoral staff member, primarily as senior pastor, of churches in Mississippi, Tennessee, Texas, and Missouri. These ministries followed a career in law enforcement, with Gates on the staff of police departments in Memphis, Tupelo, Miss., and Allen, Texas, while also serving as an agent with the U.S. Border Patrol.

Gates has served as an adjunct online instructor for Itawamba Community College, as a part of the Philosophy and Religion Department, while also serving as an associate professor for College of the Ozarks as part of the Criminal Justice program.

Before joining the Children's Home, Gates was a member of the Executive Board of the Missouri Baptist Convention.

Noah Angel

In late spring of 1993, I received an invitation to come to Missouri through the Language and Missions Department of the Missouri Baptist Convention. The program was called Super Summer. I was living at the time in Los Angeles, and I was recommended by a pastor friend of mine to Mauricio Vargas, who at the time oversaw ethnic ministries for Missouri Baptists.

After my time was over that summer, I felt that God was making it clear that I should remain in Missouri, specifically in mid-Missouri. Mauricio became one of the best mentors I have ever had. I traveled with him all over the state, wherever he was informed that groups of immigrants were present. We went to see what their needs were and, most important of all, to share the good news of Jesus Christ with them.

I learned how Mauricio made appointments to speak with the pastor of the First Baptist Church in the towns we visited, requesting space where our new friends could meet for Bible study and, perhaps, English as a Second Language classes. He was never denied. It was a vibrant enthusiasm to make Jesus known to newcomers in our state.

It was in early 1994 that I became pastor of the Hispanic Mission in California, Mo., hosted at First Baptist, California, and sponsored by the Missouri Baptist Convention. Mauricio then explained to me how Baptists in Missouri supported each other through the Cooperative Program. It's when I learned that my airline tickets to visit Missouri the first time, and all the expenses for that summer were covered through the Cooperative Program, as well as the sponsorship of new mission work in California and surrounding areas.

A few years later, while studying at the University of Missouri in Columbia, we felt the need to start a Hispanic congregation there. Again, it was through the initiative of the Language and Missions Department (Mauricio Vargas and Jerry Fields), funded through the Cooperative program, that a new Hispanic mission was started in the fall of 1998.

Two years later, a full-time pastor was called from Mexico and, as of this year, two Hispanic churches are still thriving in Columbia because of that effort. More pastors from many different countries have been sponsored to come to Missouri to serve the needs of people groups in our state.

In the 2000s, I was part of the first partnership between the Missouri Baptist Convention and Puerto Rico. Other partnerships followed with El Salvador and, more recently, Mexico, again funded in large measure through the Cooperative Program.

And what else can I say? Our Ethnic Leadership Development Program, affiliated with Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, has graduated many students from the church I now pastor, Familia Cristiana Internacional in Jefferson City. In 2012, six students received diplomas in Biblical Studies and six more last year. We currently have a student in the doctoral program.

What a beautiful way to pull together resources. Through the Cooperative Program, even the smallest church in the state can play a part in the mission work, spiritual and academic formation in our own state, and beyond our borders.

What a blessing! Go CP!



Noah Angel has served as pastor of Familia Cristiana Internacional (FCI) in Jefferson City for the past 15 years.

JOIN A YOUNG MAN IN HIS QUEST TO FOLLOW GOD'S
CALL TO THE MISSION FIELD.

THE MISSOURI BAPTIST CONVENTION

PRESENTS



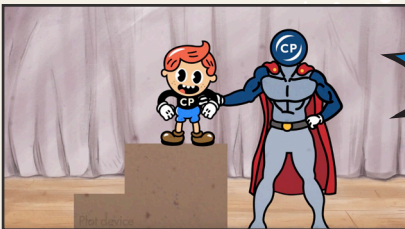
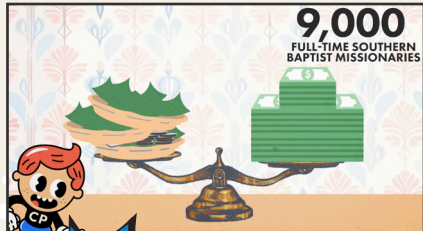
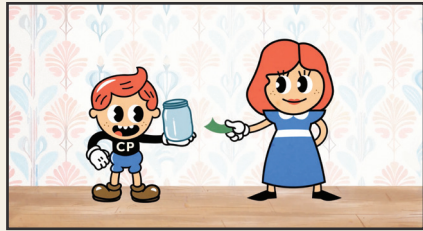
"Cooperative Program in the Balance"



Illustration by: Ryan Lake

A **mb** MISSOURI BAPTISTS production

Animation by: Neil Sneed



Download, show, and share this video that helps Missouri Baptists celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Cooperative Program. Grab the QR code or visit mobaptist.org/cp100



Better Together
A Glance at
Missouri Baptist Entities

Missouri Baptist Entities

Six entities affiliated with the Missouri Baptist Convention serve across our state. Your church's gifts to the Cooperative Program support their ministries.



1

Baptist Homes & Healthcare Ministries

bhhm.org

Main Office: *Jefferson City*

Campuses: *Adrian, Arcadia Valley, Ashland, Chillicothe, Independence, Ozark, Smithville, Tri-County*

2

Missouri Baptist Children's Home

mbch.org

Main Office: *Bridgeton [St. Louis]*

Campuses/Field Offices: *Jefferson City, Joplin, Kansas City, Mt. Vernon, Peculiar, Springfield*

3

Missouri Baptist Foundation

mbfn.org

Jefferson City

4

Hannibal-LaGrange University

hlgu.edu

Hannibal

5

Southwest Baptist University

sbuniv.edu

Main Campus: *Bolivar*

Campuses: *Mountain View, Salem, Springfield*

6

Missouri Baptist University

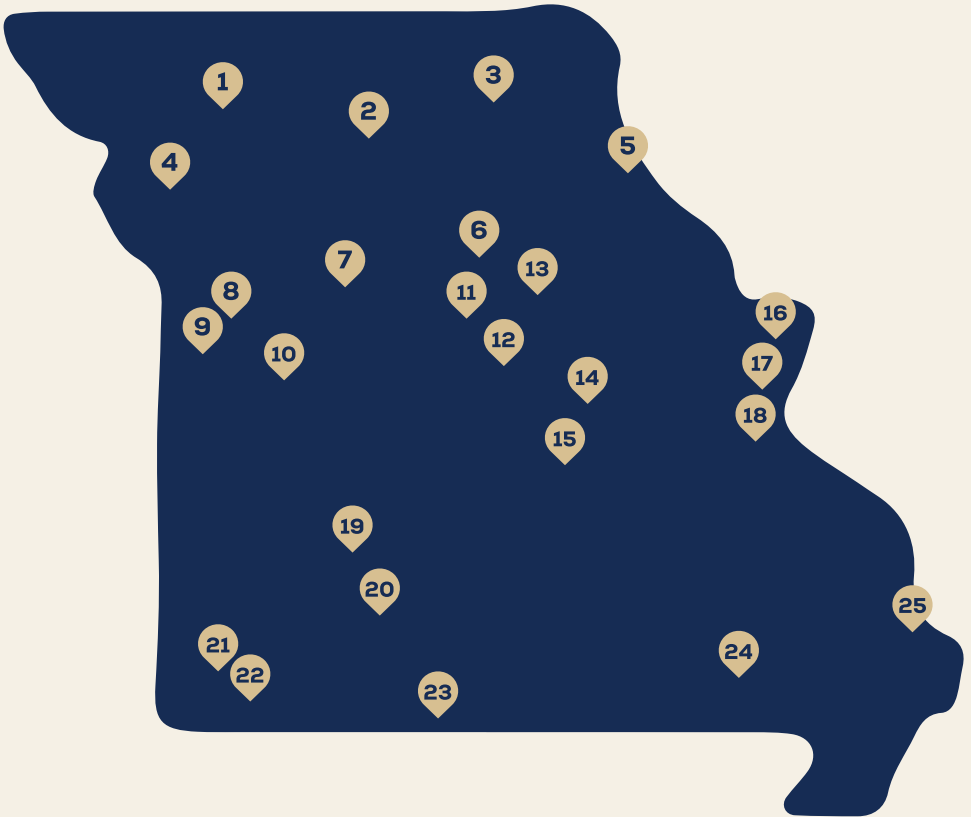
mobap.edu

Main Campus: *St. Louis*

Campuses: *Arnold, Hillsboro, Troy/Wentzville, Union*

Campus Ministries

There are approximately *300,000 college students* in Missouri. The following universities are actively being served by one or more campus missionaries.



- | | |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 1 Northwest Missouri State University | 14 State Tech |
| 2 North Central Missouri College | 15 Missouri S&T |
| 3 Truman State University | 16 Washington University |
| 4 Missouri Western State University | 17 Missouri Baptist University |
| 5 Hannibal-LaGrange University | 18 Mineral Area College |
| 6 Moberly Area Community College | 19 Southwest Baptist University |
| 7 Missouri Valley College | 20 Springfield Area Collegiate Ministries |
| 8 University of Missouri - Kansas City | 21 Missouri Southern State University |
| 9 Kansas City Area | 22 Crowder College |
| 10 University of Central Missouri | 23 College of the Ozarks |
| 11 University of Missouri | 24 Three Rivers College |
| 12 Lincoln University | 25 Southeast Missouri State University |
| 13 William Woods & Westminster | |

College students represent one of the most strategic and unreached affinity groups in our state. Your campus missionaries seek to saturate every campus in Missouri with the gospel and equip every student to make disciples wherever they go.

Text ***MBCOLLEGIATE*** to ***800-736-6227*** to sign up for campus missionary prayer updates.

For more information, visit mbcollegiate.org.



**"WHEN YOU GIVE TO YOUR CHURCH,
YOU MAKE ME A KID AGAIN."**

Faith Raymond is one of more than 70 summer missionaries serving Missouri Baptists right now, thanks to your generous gifts through the Cooperative Program.

Learn more about the MBC's Collegiate Ministries at mbcollegiate.org.

Discover how your tithes and offerings help others in Missouri, across North America, and around the world at mobaptist.org/cp.

PRAY FOR MISSOURI'S SUMMER MISSIONARIES.



This Cooperative Program ad appeared in The Pathway in 2024.



***Missouri Baptist
Affiliated Ministries***
Brief Histories

Missouri Baptist Children's Home

A Brief History

The story of the Missouri Baptist Children's Home (MBCH) is one of faith, determination, cooperation, and willingness to change.

Scripture is replete with God's command to remember what he has done. He often instructs us to "write it down" and "build a memorial ... so that when your children ask 'what does this mean' you can tell them what God has done."

This is a condensed history of God's work through MBCH; on display at the Bridgeton campus is a more complete history, or visit mbch.org/media-resources.

1882-1886 Historically Baptist

MBCH was a product of ladies from five St. Louis Baptist churches. As they planned, pondered, and worked to create an orphan's home, there was never any doubt that it would be a Baptist orphan's home and would be managed, supported, and operated by Baptists. Throughout the years, the bond between MBCH and Missouri Baptist churches has remained strong.

April 1886 – 1896 Strong Foundation Laid

The first Home opened its doors in April 1886. The years between 1886-1896 were a struggle but highly successful. Dedicated board members and competent matrons set a pattern for succeeding years. It had taken them long enough to get the doors opened, and they would never see them closed.

1897 – 1929 High Tide of Prosperity

These years were difficult and challenging, but the women who administered the Home were up to the task. Picking up from a devastating 1896 cyclone, they restored order to the house and served an average of 60 children. By the early 1900s, the current location was no longer adequate and plans to move were made.

A new campus and a growing population made fundraising a necessity. Several methods of fundraising were used to provide the needed capital (Strawberry



Dr. Edward Blake welcomes children to his office. Blake served for three decades as head of the Children's Home.

Festival and Birthday Offering are still used today). In 1908, Dr. Milford Riggs became the first full-time fundraiser, and the constitution and bylaws were changed to empower the Baptist General Convention to elect board members. By 1929, the Home was financially secure.

1930 – 1944 Years of Trouble and Change

These fourteen years were a time of transition for the Home. Many changes occurred, including the name change to Missouri Baptist Children's Home. The past held a rich legacy, an inheritance of love, concern, and sacrificial personal giving – both of time and money. That tradition was expanded during the next 30 years. Many people deserve credit for this, but one name overshadows that time: Edgar E. Blake.

1945 – 1974 The Blake Years

Edgar Blake, coming from a school administrative position, was accustomed to boards and to making “on-the-spot” decisions. In his new position, he intended to cooperate with the board, but also to be a decisive leader.



An aerial view of the Children's Home campus in 1959.

Blake immediately began the long process of changing MBCH from a “child’s warehouse to an individual treatment center” including cottages resembling a homelike atmosphere.

In the 1960s, MBCH began to emphasize foster care as the primary method to care for children. In the 1970s, daycare opened in the Barnes Building as a model center. Childcare now included: institutional care, group home care, foster home care, adoptive home care, unmarried mother services, daycare service, and counseling services.

1974 – 1980 Years of Turmoil

These years were some of the most difficult in the history of MBCH. Due to programming expansion, campus expansion, and aging facilities, the financial strain took its toll. God, however, was already raising up the next generation of leaders. Russell Martin and Bob Kenison had already been added to the staff as business manager and development officer. Some time later, Kenison was unanimously elected as interim administrator, and the position became permanent shortly thereafter. The team of Kenison and Martin was to usher MBCH into the greatest days of the agency’s history.

1980 – 2014 *The Kenison Years*

During these years, MBCH experienced a time of leadership stability with Russell Martin (business manager) and Robert Springate (development officer) serving alongside Kenison throughout his entire administration. This was a time of financial stability but also geographic and ministry expansion.

2014 – 2024 *The Martin Years*

In 2014, Kenison retired, and the Board elected Russell Martin to lead and serve as the president of MBCH. Board members knew the Kenison years were a time of change and growth and sensed the importance of a time of stability. The selection of Martin showed the Board's commitment to continue the legacy of leadership and ministry, as well as to build upon the solid financial foundation for future expansion. These years saw a time of continued expansion in services and ministry, as well as a focus on looking to the future as the political culture became more unstable.

Present Day

July 2024 ushered in a new era with the retirement of Russell Martin. Dr. Justin Gates began as the new president of MBCH. The Board selected Gates, confident that his previous roles, experiences, and education prepared him to lead MBCH as the organization fulfills its mission through direct service to children, youth, and families, and by supporting local churches in their efforts to do the same.

Much has changed through the ministry's 140-year history, but one thing will not change: our commitment to be a Christ-centered agency. While we are committed to providing care that meets or exceeds the best professional standards, we will only do so as we unapologetically share the gospel of Jesus Christ with all of the children and families in our care.

Baptist Homes & Healthcare Ministries

A Brief History

Somewhere on the back roads of the early 20th century in Missouri, God spoke to the heart of a young pastor who, while traveling the state working to start Baptist Young People Unions, became painfully aware of the destitute nature of many older retired Baptist ministers. After decades of service to Baptist churches, these elderly pastors were now facing their last years with no retirement income, no home, as most had lived in parsonages, and little support outside of family. This reality burned into the heart of Dr. Milford Riggs, who, in 1913 with the able assistance of his wife, Mary, set about to open the first Baptist home for “retired” pastors and their spouses.

From such small beginnings in the foothills of the Ozark Mountains, the dream of The Baptist Home began. Those first decades were marked with innovation, creativity, and financial crisis. Over the decades, The Home found its footing and expanded to a large ministry in rural Ironton. The reach of The Home extended to every city and hamlet in Missouri, as retired pastors and, eventually, many other destitute Baptists came to know The Home as their final earthly home. Eventually, The Home expanded to have a regional footprint with campuses in Chillicothe, Ozark, and Ashland.

After a lengthy and difficult period of separation from the Missouri Baptist Convention early in the 2000s, The Home returned to the governance of the



A modern view of the first Baptist Home in Ironton.



Missouri Baptist Convention, and a new period of expansion began. During the height of the COVID 19 pandemic, Baptist Homes & Healthcare Ministries (our new name) acquired three existing homes that were Medicare and Medicaid eligible. This opened the door for Baptist Homes to minister to more people, in more places, with greater access to financial resources to which all working Missourians had contributed.

Today, Baptist Homes are generally located within two and half hours of any point in the state and offer independent living, assisted living, memory care, skilled nursing, and inpatient and outpatient physical therapy. This means a resident of Baptist Homes can have virtually all his or her needs met through the ministry of Baptist Homes.

Every long-term care organization is tasked by the state and federal government to provide for the physical, medical, and emotional needs of aging seniors. At Baptist Homes, we seek to address all these needs with the utmost skill and proficiency. The greatest difference provided by Baptist Homes & Healthcare Ministries is what we call Soul Care. We believe that every senior has the responsibility to continue to grow in his or her discipleship. There is no expiration date on being a disciple of Christ. We also recognize that a growing number of seniors are entering our care without a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus, we seek to minister to, challenge, and evangelize our residents in all aspects of their lives while they live at Baptist Homes. We seek to have a spiritual activity daily that involves Bible studies, worship, prayer times, times to share one's testimony, and individual prayer and Scripture reading. We do this through the service of various levels of our staff and through an increasing involvement of volunteers.

Baptist Homes exists to please God and help others do the same by making Christlike ministry the standard of care for the aging.

Missouri Baptist Foundation

A Brief History

The Missouri Baptist Foundation (MBF) was founded in 1946 through the prayers, vision, and faith of Missouri Baptist leaders who saw the need for a financial ministry to serve churches, ministries, and individuals across the state. On June 28, 1946, nine trustees officially organized the Foundation: Claude R. Blue, Virgil Dent, Forest A. Lowry, T.W. Medearis, J.A. Hemphil, L.G. Keley, V.W. Wilhite, Ray F. Moseley, and K.J. O'Banion. T.W. Medearis served as MBF's first president from 1946 to 1949.



T.W. Medearis, first president of the Missouri Baptist Foundation

Starting modestly with just three accounts totaling about \$80,000, the Foundation steadily grew through faithful stewardship, prayerful leadership, and God's provision. One early trustee, Roy Johnson, boldly envisioned the Foundation "investing ten million dollars" one day - a vision that was not only realized but was far exceeded, demonstrating the power of faith-driven stewardship. Every investment, endowment, and grant is grounded in the belief that God-honoring financial stewardship can advance the gospel for generations.

Through the decades, the Foundation remained steadfast and mission-focused, even amid transitions in Missouri Baptists, the state, and the nation. Its purpose - to strengthen ministries and help believers steward resources for gospel impact - has never wavered. This commitment carried MBF through challenging seasons, without compromising its core calling to serve faithfully.



Decades later, the heart of this 1950s ad still drives the ministries of the Foundation.



Shelly Vaughn (right) serves as the Foundation's chief operating officer. Meaningful conversations with Missouri Baptists lead to lasting kingdom impact.

Today, MBF manages over \$200 million in assets across more than 1,000 accounts. It serves churches, associations, individuals, and institutions by providing biblically aligned investment services, charitable giving strategies, estate planning guidance, and trust administration. Responding to evolving needs, MBF introduced cash management products designed for ministries and individuals to steward short-term reserves alongside long-term investments.

In 2022, MBF launched a church grant program to help Missouri Baptist Convention churches overcome financial barriers and expand their ministries. Over \$235,000 has been awarded to projects such as outreach events, student space renovations, counseling centers, sports parks, and facility upgrades – tangible investments equipping local churches to better serve their communities.

MBF now distributes more than \$30 million annually in Missouri and worldwide. Many of these funds come from faithful planning by individuals and families who desire their resources to continue advancing gospel work after their lifetimes. The Missouri Baptist Foundation exists because of the trust, generosity, and prayers of Missouri Baptists who believe in faithful giving and wise stewardship for the kingdom's sake. As Dr. K.J. O'Banion said over 70 years ago:

"The Missouri Baptist Foundation is a means of giving ourselves, represented by our gifts and money and our wills, to carry on our Baptist work in Missouri until Jesus comes again."

To learn more about how the Foundation can serve you, your church, or ministry, visit mbfn.org or call (573) 761-0717.

Hannibal-LaGrange University

A Brief History

Established in 1858, Hannibal-LaGrange University (HLGU) provides an excellent education in a co-educational environment that instills character-building principles and Christian ideals. While HLGU has grown physically far beyond what its founders could have imagined, it has remained true to its original spiritual and educational mission and continues to serve as both a community of faith and a center of academic achievement.



HLGU's entrance in 1963.

HLGU has a rich history, including the 1928 move from LaGrange, Missouri, to its present site in Hannibal, which was made with the support of the Hannibal Chamber of Commerce and the area community. The university began offering four-year degrees in 1981.



Students relax on the front lawn of HLGU's Burt Administration Building.

In 1989, Hannibal-LaGrange University suffered the loss of its administration building in a catastrophic fire. Located in this building were the administrative offices, cafeteria, gym, auditorium, and classrooms. Amazingly, only one day of classes was missed as a result of the fire. College personnel responded to the challenge immediately and relocated classrooms and offices to other buildings on campus. The fire served as a catalyst for significant growth for Hannibal-LaGrange University. HLGU then conducted the most successful capital campaign in the history of the university, which more than doubled the space lost in the 1989 fire.

Having been built on a great tradition of Christian higher education, Hannibal-LaGrange University has withstood many tests throughout its long history. Through each period of adjustment and change, HLGU has emerged stronger and more determined to carry out its vision of equipping students with “Knowledge for Service.”

Missouri Baptist University

A Brief History

Walking through the Missouri Baptist University (MBU) campus today, it's hard to imagine that 60 years ago this thriving university was just a small extension campus with a modest group of students. Today, MBU has blossomed into a vibrant Christian institution known for its expanding enrollment, ever-growing campus, and esteemed faculty.

In 1957, Hannibal-LaGrange College opened an extension site at Tower Grove Baptist Church in St. Louis, enrolling 68 students. These early courses were aimed at pastors and laymen, but the vision quickly grew beyond its original scope. By 1960, the influence of students, Baptist leaders, and local pastors led to the Missouri Baptist Convention's decision to establish a Baptist college in St. Louis.

The journey officially began in 1964 with the first meeting of the board of trustees, followed by the groundbreaking of the original 81-acre campus site in 1967. Just a year later, nearly 200 students were attending classes, setting the stage for MBU's first graduating class in 1973. President Frank Kellogg presided over the commencement ceremony where 29 students received Bachelor of Arts degrees.



An aerial view of the MBU campus in 1981.



Travis Brown was in MBU's first graduating class in May of 1973. He became a distinguished alumnus and lifelong friend of the school until his recent passing.

MBU's progress continued steadily. In 1978, under the leadership of its third president, Robert Sutherland, the college earned initial accreditation from the North Central Association, a crucial step in establishing its academic credibility. The early 90s brought more growth as presidents Patrick Copley and Thomas S. Field focused on modernizing campus facilities and securing the financial stability needed to sustain the college's future.

A turning point came in 1995 when R. Alton Lacey was appointed as the university's president. His tenure marked a period of rapid growth, with the university doubling its housing capacity with the opening of North Hall. The Spirit of Excellence Campaign followed in 1999, raising \$10 million for the construction of the Pillsbury Chapel and Dale Williams Fine Arts Center, a facility that would become a central hub of campus life.

As MBU transitioned into the new millennium, it continued to evolve. In 2000, the university was approved to offer its first master's-level program, the Master of Science in Education. Two years later, Missouri Baptist College officially became Missouri Baptist University, reflecting its growing role in higher education.



Students welcome one another on their return to campus in the fall of 1998.

MBU's commitment to innovation was evident in 2008 with the launch of its first online degree program. The following year, MBU introduced its first terminal degree program, the Doctor of Education.

The next decade saw continued growth in both facilities and enrollment. The opening of Spartan Village in 2011 marked a new chapter in campus residential life, offering modern apartment-style living and a state-of-the-art sports complex. By 2013, MBU's enrollment reached a record 5,200 students.

The university's 50th anniversary in 2014 was a moment of celebration, coinciding with Dr. Lacey's 20th year as president. That year also saw the launch of MBU's football program, symbolizing the university's commitment to providing a comprehensive student experience.

In 2018, Keith L. Ross ('88) became the university's seventh president. Under his leadership, MBU has achieved enrollment milestones, welcoming the largest freshman class in the institution's history in 2022. Ross also oversaw the completion of Spartan Field, as well as the major renovation to the Jung-Kellogg Learning Center on the university's main campus. MBU continues to expand its academic offerings, including vibrant undergraduate and graduate programs in the School of Nursing.

As MBU looks to the future, its foundation remains rooted in the values and vision that have guided its growth for six decades, ensuring that MBU remains a shining beacon at the intersection of faith and learning.

Southwest Baptist University

A Brief History

Southwest Baptist University (SBU) first opened its doors in 1878 in Lebanon, Mo., as Southwest Baptist College. In 1879, the college was chartered by the state of Missouri and moved to Bolivar. Early writings recount a legacy of sacrificial giving and extraordinary efforts by Baptists in southwest Missouri to establish and maintain the college. The founders, Abner S. Ingman and James R. Maupin, faced many difficulties as they rode horseback seeking funds, students, and an ideal college site.

Each spring semester, SBU celebrates Founders Day. It's a time to reflect on our rich heritage and to remember that in 1878, our founding fathers, Ingman and Maupin, established Southwest Baptist College. Founders Day is an important time when we are challenged to reflect on our past and to thank God for the people who have made the success of today possible.

The college faced many hardships in its early years and closed from 1910-13 to regain financial solvency and to recover from a devastating fire that destroyed the college's only building. The efforts and prayers of area supporters and Missouri Baptists



SBU's main campus is in Bolivar, Mo.



brought results, and the college reopened in 1913 as a two-year junior college.

The university has maintained its strong Baptist heritage through its affiliation with the Missouri Baptist Convention, which provides financial support for the university and whose messengers elect the 25-member

board of trustees that governs the institution. The Missouri Baptist Convention approved plans in 1964 for the college to become a senior liberal arts college. The first baccalaureate degrees were awarded in 1967. Bolivar citizens donated a 102-acre farm on the southern edge of the city that allowed the college to expand beyond the small 10-acre campus located near downtown.

Another milestone occurred in 1981 when the college name was changed to Southwest Baptist University. In 1995, the university entered a joint nursing education agreement with St. John's Regional Medical Center in Springfield, Mo., to form St. John's School of Nursing of SBU. The school has changed names a number of times since then. Today, the Mercy College of Health Professions at SBU maintains a valuable and growing partnership with Mercy Health Systems in Springfield.

Today, SBU is a thriving higher education institution with more than 2,400 undergraduate and graduate students enrolled annually. SBU offers more than 100 academic areas of study and has become a College of Distinction in Education, Business, Nursing, Affordability, and Christianity. The 152-acre main campus is in the southern portion of Bolivar, a community of about 10,300 residents that serves as the county seat of Polk County. Bolivar is located about 25 miles north of Springfield, which is the third-largest city in Missouri after St. Louis and Kansas City.

The university also operates campuses in Mountain View, Salem, and Springfield, Mo. An online campus was added in 2019, and today SBU Worldwide has grown to offer 12 different online degree programs. SBU's mission is to equip students academically, spiritually, and socially for a lifetime of servant leadership.

Commissions Serving

Missouri Baptists

Missouri Baptists elect members of two commissions that give 1,700 MBC-affiliated churches a voice in public policy and preserve their heritage.



The Christian Life Commission (CLC) assists Missouri Baptists in the propagation of the gospel by challenging them to be salt and light in accordance with Mathew 5:13-16.

The CLC's purpose and responsibility are to educate and encourage churches affiliated with the MBC to challenge their memberships to the ideal of biblical living as outlined in *The Baptist Faith & Message*, including the sanctity of human life, religious liberty, family values, substance abuse prevention, and combating gambling and pornography.

The commission serves as the public policy arm of the Missouri Baptist Convention, as well as a resource for Missouri Baptists navigating the demands of citizenship and seeking biblical insight into cultural challenges.

Learn more at mbcclc.org.



MISSOURI BAPTIST
**HISTORICAL
COMMISSION**

The Historical Commission helps Missouri Baptist churches remember their past by assisting in the preservation of church records, and by recognizing milestone anniversaries with custom certificates and ideas for commemorative services.

The commission serves as the historical memory of Baptist tradition in the state. This includes preserving Old Bethel, the oldest non-Catholic church west of the Mississippi River. The commission also promotes research on Baptist history through scholarship initiatives, including support for students attending MBC-affiliated universities who study aspects of Missouri Baptist history.

The commission's website, **baptistparchments.org**, offers resources and guidance for churches seeking to document and honor their past.



A Declaration of Cooperation

A Declaration of Cooperation

SBC, MBC Leaders Gather in Memphis to Mark the Cooperative Program's 100th Anniversary

By Brandon Porter

The Ellis Auditorium was brand new May 13, 1925, when Southern Baptists met on a spring afternoon and voted to begin the Cooperative Program. Today (May 13), though the auditorium is gone, Southern Baptists gathered just a few yards away from the original location to recommit to cooperative partnership.

“The Cooperative Program, while commonplace to us, was a never-before-attempted method of funding shared ministry and mission efforts,” SBC Executive Committee President Jeff Long said in the keynote address to the group.

Dozens of Southern Baptist pastors and leaders gathered to sign a Declaration of Cooperation, just as SBC leaders did to mark the 50th anniversary in 1975.

“My appeal today is to reaffirm our commitment to cooperation and the Cooperative Program in its simplest form – a shared funding mechanism for state and regional



Dozens of pastors, SBC officers, state Baptist convention leaders, SBC ethnic leaders and others gather May 13, 2025, to commemorate Southern Baptists' adoption of the Cooperative Program 100 years ago in Memphis.

(Photo by Jim Veneman)



**SBC Executive Committee President
Jeff Iorg delivers the keynote
address. (Photo by Jim Veneman)**

conventions and the national Convention to substantially provide the funding needed for all our work,” Iorg said. “We should do this for many biblical, theological and methodological reasons – but mostly for this very practical, proven reason – it works!”

Seventy-three pastors, national SBC leaders, state convention leaders (including MBC Executive Director Wes Fowler) and ethnic leaders gathered to sign the document that thanked local churches for a century of generosity and commended “all who promote,

support, and renew their commitment to the Cooperative Program among our family of churches, mission boards, seminaries, entities, local Baptist associations, and state conventions.”

Before 1925, Southern Baptist churches gave to missionary, evangelistic and educational endeavors based on individual pleas by organizational or societal representatives. Each church gave what it deemed best, leaving fundraisers constantly scrambling to make their pitch and churches feeling the pressure of constant requests.

In 1919, Southern Baptists agreed to a five-year campaign to raise \$75 million dollars to fund these missionary endeavors. While the pledges came in at \$92,630,923, the actual giving by 1924 fell short at \$58,591,713.

It was the next year that a group led by Louisiana pastor M.E. Dodd brought the idea of the Cooperative Program to the annual meeting and messengers adopted it. Southern Baptist calls for a systematic method of giving date all the way back to 1888. Dodd pastored First Baptist Church of Shreveport, Louisiana, from 1912 until his retirement in 1950. He is known in Southern Baptist history as one of the greatest promoters of the Cooperative Program in its early years, rallying hundreds of churches to cooperate.



MBC Executive Director Wes Fowler signs the Declaration of Cooperation, along with dozens of other SBC, state-convention, and affiliate-group leaders. (Photo by Jim Veneman)

The pulpit Dodd preached from at FBC Shreveport from 1922-1950 was shared by the Northwest Louisiana Baptist Association for the gathering. To stand at Dodd's pulpit was special for South Carolina Baptist Convention Executive Director Tony Wolfe, who spearheaded the event.

"It's very meaningful, not just for me, but I think for everybody who steps up to that pulpit and signs this Declaration of Cooperation," Wolfe said. He hopes for a renewal of "unity and purpose" for Southern Baptists, as M.E. Dodd said in 1925. SBC Registration Secretary Don Currence said he fought tears as he prepared to sign the declaration. "It was a very humbling experience," said Currence. "It's a day I'll never forget."

Other platform guests included International Mission Board President Paul Chitwood, Texas pastor Caleb Turner and Baptist Convention of New England Executive Director Terry Dorsett.

Turner, pastor of Mesquite Friendship Baptist Church, told Baptist Press, "We are invested in the Cooperative Program because we wouldn't be where we are today without what we receive through the Cooperative Program." Mesquite started as a church plant in 1991.

"From the very beginning we understood the importance of receiving. And so, therefore, because we've been blessed in such a way, we want to reciprocate that same thing," Turner said. Dorsett remembered the early days of the Cooperative Program and the challenges Southern Baptists faced in 1925.

He quoted South Carolina's Charles E. Burts, who spoke to messengers in 1925: "The difficulties we face are more than matched by the ability of our people to meet them if we approach them in faith, prayer, courage and sacrifice."



MBC Executive Director Wes Fowler (right) and MBC President Wesley Vance (center) visit with Hershael York, dean of the School of Theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, following the signing of the Declaration of Cooperation. (Photo by Jim Veneman)

A season of prayer for churches and pastors, SBC entities and state conventions was led by April Bunn, Chuck Lawless, Carolyn Fountain, Bruno Molina, Hoon Im and Hershael York.

Committed to the Great Commission

Sandy Wisdom-Martin, executive director-treasurer of the Woman’s Missionary Union, signed the declaration on behalf of the organization. “You know, as Southern Baptists, we have one thing that unites us at the core, and that is our responsibility to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth,” she told Baptist Press. “The Great Commission is urgent, and it’s a priority for us as Southern Baptists.”

Through the Cooperative Program, Southern Baptists have 3,500 fully funded missionaries across every continent, help support 600 church plants annually and help train thousands of seminary students for the purposes of spreading Jesus’ message and making disciples.

International Mission Board President Paul Chitwood pointed the gathering to another gathering found in Revelation 7, where God’s people from every tribe and nation will lift their voices in praise to God. “Thank you, Lord, for letting us be a part of the vision coming to pass,” Chitwood prayed to close the event.

“Thank you for a people called Southern Baptists, who for 180 years have worked together to steward that vision and who for 100 years have given generously through the Cooperative Program to steward that vision. Lord, might you find us, in our generation, faithful stewards of this vision, giving generously to see that missionaries are sent and supported, that the Gospel is preached and that the lost are saved.”

Committed to Generosity

Since the inception of the Cooperative Program, Southern Baptists have given more than \$20 billion nationally to support missions, seminary education, church planting, disaster relief, public policy work, and more (\$775 million has come from Missouri Baptists).

“The Great Commission is why we cooperate,” SBC President Clint Pressley told Baptist Press. “We have to cooperate to accomplish what we’re all trying to do together.”

Brandon Porter serves as vice president for Communications at the SBC Executive Committee.

Resolution: Declaration of Cooperation

Following is the text of the Declaration of Cooperation signed by SBC leaders May 13, 2025, in Memphis, Tenn.:

WHEREAS, Upon the semicentennial anniversary of the Cooperative Program 32 influential Southern Baptist leaders signed a “Declaration of Cooperation” which expressed their affirmation of Southern Baptist Great Commission cooperation, their appreciation for the Cooperative Program, and their solidarity in continuing the work; and*

WHEREAS, Jesus has given us, His followers, the Great Commission and empowered us by His Holy Spirit to accomplish its end (Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8); and

WHEREAS, The biblical doctrine of cooperation compels us to work together and thereby effect a greater reward for our efforts (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12); and

WHEREAS, Upon the adoption of the Cooperative Program at the 1925 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Memphis, Tennessee, the Executive Committee declared that “the successes of the future depend upon the heroic spirit shown by our people at this time,” then urged the pledging of Southern Baptists “in the fullest support to the Cooperative Program as the best and most practical way of meeting our obligations and providing for the ongoing of all our enterprises”; and

WHEREAS, Since 1925 the Cooperative Program has provided a comprehensive funding mechanism for like-minded Baptist churches to support missions in all the world, all the time, at the same time; and

WHEREAS, As a result of Cooperative Program commitment and by the grace of God, our Baptist life has prospered in terms of unity, missions, and ministry throughout Baptist state conventions and Cooperative Program-funded national and international enterprises; and

WHEREAS, During these past 100 years Southern Baptists have deployed more than \$20 billion through the Cooperative Program, demonstrating both the vast wealth God has entrusted to their stewardship and their willingness to sacrificially invest that

wealth into Great Commission cooperation through Southern Baptist enterprises; and


WHEREAS, We have made a great commitment to our Southern Baptist missionaries, both at home and abroad, and to the ongoing work of our Southern Baptist entities and state conventions, all whose Great Commission efforts are supported and sustained through Cooperative Program giving; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That we, the undersigned, affirm the Cooperative Program as a missions-funding strategy God has blessed to support and strengthen Southern Baptist efforts to share the Gospel throughout the world; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we are grateful for Southern Baptist churches and individuals that give faithfully and sacrificially through the Cooperative Program; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That we commend all who promote, support, and renew their commitment to the Cooperative Program among our family of churches, mission boards, seminaries, entities, local Baptist associations, and state conventions.

**1975 Declaration of Cooperation: "Because we as Southern Baptists recognize That Christ established the church to carry out his divine purpose in the world, and That the genius of our life as autonomous New Testament churches is our freedom to cooperate in order to make evident our unity in Christ and to give substance to our common purpose to proclaim the gospel, and That our life as a denomination emerged historically in 1845 in an effort to elicit, combine, and direct those resources over which God has placed us as stewards, and That in 1925 our forebears committed themselves to a new level of interdependence in a relationship of stewardship called the Cooperative Program, and That as a result of that commitment our denominational life has by the grace of God prospered in terms of unity, missions, and ministry, We Hereby Declare this program of cooperation to be self-evident of our denominational unity and a manifestation of our vision for the future under the Lordship of Christ, and We Therefore recommit ourselves in prayer to that trust, sacrifice, and resolve necessary for the responsible expression of our life together in Christ through our Cooperative Program.*



**“When you give
to your church,
I have a home for
Christmas.”**

Your local Missouri Baptist church sends a portion of its budget to the **Cooperative Program**, which provides Christian foster homes through the Missouri Baptist Children’s Home.

Discover how your gifts help others in Missouri, across North America, and around the world at mobaptist.org/cp.

Learn more at mbch.org.





Quiz:
*How Well Do You Know the
Cooperative Program?*

Test Your Knowledge of CP by Taking This Quiz.

Find the correct answers on page 98.

1. The Cooperative Program is:

- (a) An annual membership fee your church pays to belong to the Missouri Baptist Convention
- (b) The funding process Southern Baptists have used since 1925 to support missions at the state, national, and international levels
- (c) Three levels of Southern Baptist cooperation: associational, state, and national
- (d) A money-back campaign similar to a credit-card rewards program

2. True or false: The Cooperative Program begins with you – your tithes and offerings to your Missouri Baptist church.

True ----- **False** -----

3. Which of the following does the Cooperative Program *not* support financially:

- (a) Thousands of full-time missionaries across North America and around the world
- (b) Foster care, adoption care, and rescue from human trafficking
- (c) Collegiate ministries on 25 Missouri campuses
- (d) The maintenance and repairs of your church building
- (e) Christian higher education in Missouri, and theological education at six U.S. seminaries
- (f) Prayer, evangelism, church planting, and missions mobilization
- (g) Church renewal ministries like the Resound Network and Leader Care

4. True or false: Ministers of Missouri Baptist churches are eligible to receive complimentary life insurance, as well as contributions to their retirement accounts, thanks to the Cooperative Program.

True ----- **False** -----

5. Missouri Baptists have given how much to the Cooperative Program over the last 100 years:

- (a) \$126 million
- (b) \$498 million
- (c) \$775 million
- (d) \$1.2 bazillion

6. Which of the following organizations are supported by your church's gifts to the Cooperative Program (select all that apply):

- (a) The Missouri Baptist Children's Home
- (b) The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- (c) Habitat for Humanity
- (d) The International Mission Board
- (e) Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
- (f) Baptist Homes & Healthcare Ministries
- (g) The Missouri Baptist Foundation
- (h) NFL Players Association
- (i) Missouri Baptist University
- (j) Red Cross
- (k) Hannibal-LaGrange University
- (l) Southwest Baptist University
- (m) Feed the Children
- (n) Catholic Relief Services
- (o) The North American Mission Board

7. In what city was the Cooperative Program established in 1925:

- (a) Memphis, Tenn.
- (b) Atlanta, Ga.
- (c) Richmond, Va.
- (d) St. Louis
- (e) Pulaski, Wis.

8. Prior to the establishment of CP, how did Southern Baptist ministries raise funds from SBC churches:

- (a) Membership dues
- (b) The “societal method”
- (c) Crowdfunding
- (d) Browbeating
- (e) Shameless self-promotion

9. Why should Missouri Baptist churches give to the Cooperative Program (select all that apply):

- (a) CP enables every giver and every local church to make an impact for Christ at home and across the globe.
- (b) CP supports dozens of ministries, from disaster relief to Christian higher education.
- (c) CP giving comes back to the local church - in training, events, resources, church-staff retirement and insurance benefits, and other ministries for the church.
- (d) Contributing to CP at least once a year is a requirement for affiliation with the MBC.
- (e) All of the above
- (f) Only (a) and (b)

10. Who decides how Missouri Baptists’ Cooperative Program gifts are distributed:

- (a) The president of the MBC, who is elected each year at the annual meeting
- (b) The Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention
- (c) Messengers to the MBC Annual Meeting, who vote on a proposed budget
- (d) None of the above

Thanks for taking the time to test your knowledge of CP. Turn to page 98 for the correct answers.

And thanks for giving faithfully to your Missouri Baptist church.



**“When you give to your church,
you make certified estate planning professionals
available to us at no cost or obligation.”**

Your local Missouri Baptist church sends a portion of its budget to the Cooperative Program which supports the ministries of the Missouri Baptist Foundation.

Learn how the MBF helps you and your church at mbfn.org.

Discover how your gifts help others in Missouri, across North America, and around the world at mobaptist.org/cp.



This Cooperative Program ad appeared in The Pathway in 2021

Answer Key

Here are the correct answers to the quiz on pages 94-96.

1. (b)
2. True
3. (d)
4. True
5. (c)
6. (a), (d), (e), (f), (g), (i), (k), (l), (o)
7. (a)
8. (b)
9. (e)
10. (c)



◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

When you give to your church, you care for our seniors.

A portion of the tithes and offerings given to your Missouri Baptist church goes to the Cooperative Program, which helps **Baptist Homes & Healthcare Ministries** provide compassionate care for those who have spent their lives caring for us.

Learn more about all the ministries of Baptist Homes at bhhm.org.

Learn how your gifts to the Cooperative Program help others in Missouri, across North America, and around the world at mobaptist.org/cp.



This Cooperative Program ad appeared in The Pathway in 2023



WHEN YOU GIVE TO YOUR CHURCH, YOU SUPPORT THESE COOPERATIVE MINISTRIES:

STATE MISSIONS



Prayer



Evangelism



Missions Mobilization



Church Planting
SEND Missouri



Church Renewal



Media & Communications



Entity Relations



Collegiate Ministries



Disaster Relief



The Pathway

CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION



Hannibal-LaGrange University



Missouri Baptist University



Southwest Baptist University

BENEVOLENT MINISTRIES



Missouri Baptist Children's Home



Baptist Homes & Healthcare Ministries

LEGACY MINISTRIES



Missouri Baptist Foundation

NATIONAL PARTNERS



Executive Committee of the SBC



Gateway Seminary



International Mission Board



Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary



North American Mission Board



New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary



Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission



The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary



Lifeway Christian Resources



Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary



GuideStone Financial Services



Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

