

Pam 6840 #446

Promoting the Co-Operative Program Through the District Association

The highest success of the Cooperative Program of Southern Baptists is assured when the great majority of our churches become adequately informed upon and vitally interested and fully enlisted in it. And our district associations—the Baptist agency that is nearest to the churches geographically and most closely related to them organically—offers the denomination its best instrumentality for reaching our churches with the proper message and motive concerning the Cooperative Program and enlisting the churches in the support of this co-operative effort in providing for the financial needs of foreign, home and state missions, ministerial relief, and our Baptist schools, hospitals and orphanages.

Five Things Must Be Done

For the district association to make the largest contribution to the Cooperative Program, however, it must see to it, first, that the Cooperative Program is given an adequate hearing at the annual meeting of the association; second, accept a definite objective in the

support of the Program; third, secure the cooperation of the individual churches in assuming a definite proportion of this objective; fourth, see to it that an Every-Member Canvass is taken in every church to subscribe the objective assumed by the church; and, fifth arrange with the pastors or officers of the various churches for the presentation to the churches from time to time during the year of messages of information and inspiration upon the general denominational work fostered by the Cooperative Program so that the individual church members will know where their money is going and something of what it is accomplishing in the Lord's service.

Plan of Presentation Proposed

In the consideration of the Cooperative Program by the associations in annual session the following suggestions will be found helpful:

1. Have a committee bring in an intelligent report upon the Cooperative Program. This report should set out briefly what the Program is, what it proposes to accomplish for our several departments of work, the particular task that has been assumed for the current year, and what portion of that task should be assumed by the churches of this particular association.

2. There should be a general discussion of the Program, following the reading of the report. This discussion should consist of several brief addresses of a few minutes each rather than one long speech. Opportunity should be given for any messenger of the association to ask any question of interest. A well-conducted round table is frequently one of the

most effective means for arousing interest and disseminating the most helpful sort of information.

3. While assuming a definite share in the Cooperative Program for 1927 is an important task, the association's duty will not be done unless adequate attention is given also to the completion of the financial task for 1926. This task must be clearly stated and definite plans laid for its certain performance.

Churches Should Assume Objective

4. Every church should be encouraged to assume a definite and reasonable financial objective for the Program in 1927. An aggressive committee of the most capable workers in the association should be named to promote the interests of the Cooperative Program and this committee should not rest until every church in the association has assumed a definite quota and then underwritten that quota in definite subscriptions from its members through the Every-Member Canvass. Having done this much, the committee should keep in touch with all the churches and stand ready to offer any needed assistance in keeping the claims of our general denominational work before the churches, especially those churches that are pastorless or have services only once or twice a month. A monthly workers' conference in an association is a helpful factor in keeping the general work going.

In too many cases the discussions of the various missionary, educational and benevolent causes at our associations consume so much time there is little opportunity left for the consideration of the Cooperative Program in all

its relations. The importance of a thorough discussion of the Program as a whole will be seen when it is realized that it is through the Program that all our missionary, educational and benevolent work is fostered. It is well to have the distinctive message of each cause given, but it should be kept clearly in mind that all these causes are a part of the Cooperative Program and that their needs can best be met by a liberal support of the whole Program.

If all our associations will see to it that the Program in all its scope is adequately presented at their sessions this year and the churches are enlisted in assuming a definite financial objective in the support of the Program, we will soon be able to retire the debts on all our boards and institutions, enable them to meet the many challenging opportunities before them, and see a new tide of spiritual life sweep into our churches.

Let's do the thing for the glory of God and the advancement of his kingdom in the world.