

BAPTIST VIEWpoll

FEBRUARY, 1980

VIEWpoll is a cooperative effort of the Sunday School Board and Home Mission Board to monitor quarterly certain key areas of Southern Baptists' awareness, thought, and action.

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BAPTIST VIEWpoll for February, 1980

I. INTRODUCTION

This report is a presentation of the findings from the February, 1980 poll of the Baptist VIEWpoll panel.

There are currently 637 members (271 pastors, 302 ministers of education, and 164 directors of missions) on the Baptist VIEWpoll panel. Of these, 82.3 percent (223) of the pastors, 89.7 percent (271) of the ministers of education, and 95.7 percent (157) of the directors of missions participated in the February poll.

Items on the February poll involved six areas of interest:

- Involvement in World Missions Conferences
- Attitudes toward the Cooperative Program
- Involvement in/priority of the hunger issue
- Employment of divorced persons on church staffs
- Evangelism
- Ministries to language culture groups

II. COMMENTS ON THE FINDINGS

A. The majority of the pastors (57.0%) and directors of missions (73.2%) on the panel report that their churches/associations have been involved in a World Missions Conference in the last five years. Forty-six percent (46.1%) of the ministers of education report that their churches have been involved. (Cross tabulation data for ministers of education serving in "old"* SBC states and "new" SBC states revealed that a significant percentage of those serving in "old" SBC states (50.0%) reported a World Missions Conference in their church as compared to those serving in "new" SBC states (13.8%). Further, significantly more pastors (66.2%) and ministers of education (58.4%) and directors of missions (83.8%) who serve east of the Mississippi River reported a World Missions Conference than did the pastors (40.7%), ministers of education (26.7%), and directors of missions (55.2%) who serve west of the River.)

When panel members were asked to indicate the degree of positive influence of the Conferences, the majority (56.7% of the pastors, 52.0% of the ministers of education, and 58.3% of the directors of missions) reported

*See Appendix for list of "old" and "new" SBC states.

"some" influence on "mission giving." Further, a sizable group (37.1% of the pastors, 36.8% of the ministers of education, and 48.7% of the directors of missions) reported "some" positive influence on "local mission involvement" growing out of a World Missions Conference.

13. According to the majority (51.6%) of the directors of missions, attitudes toward the Cooperative Program in their associations are "more favorable" now than this time last year. On the other hand, 54.7 percent of the pastors and 63.1 percent of the ministers of education report that attitudes toward the Cooperative Program are "about the same" now as this time last year. However, an additional 41.7 percent of the pastors and 32.8 percent of the ministers of education report that attitudes are "more favorable" now as compared to last year.

The item on attitudes toward the Cooperative Program was first placed on the December 1978 poll of the panel, and the relationship of the data from the 1978 poll to the present poll appears below. (Data is based on the response of those who answered the item on both the December, 1978 and the February, 1980 polls.)

The reasons given in both polls for favorable/unfavorable attitudes have been much the same. Favorable attitudes are fostered through promotion, publicity, education, involvement, and leadership. Unfavorable attitudes are generated by the way Cooperative funds are distributed and used.

It would appear from the data available that support for the Cooperative Program is, on the whole, either stable or slightly increasing. Negative attitudes appear to be at a minimum.

- C. Panel members were asked to indicate the ways their churches (or churches in their associations) had related to hunger issues, and the response was varied but yet there was noticeable commonality. The most prominent responses made by pastors were: designated contributions to hunger problems (36.8%); food closet (32.7%); and SBC World Hunger Day service (28.3%). The most prominent responses made by ministers of education were: designated contributions to hunger problems (55.4%); food closet (48.0%); SBC World Hunger Day service (28.0%); and Meals-on-Wheels or

ATTITUDES IN THE CHURCHES/ASSOCIATIONS TOWARD
THE COOPERATIVE PROGRAM

	<u>Pastors</u>			<u>Ministers of Education</u>			<u>Directors of Missions</u>		
	<u>December, 1978</u>			<u>December, 1978</u>			<u>December, 1978</u>		
<u>February, 1980</u>	<u>More favorable</u>	<u>Less favorable</u>	<u>About the same</u>	<u>More favorable</u>	<u>Less favorable</u>	<u>About the same</u>	<u>More favorable</u>	<u>Less favorable</u>	<u>About the same</u>
More favorable	58.9%	(3)	30.3%	50.0%	(2)	27.3%	68.2%	(1)	38.2%
Less favorable	1.4	(2)	1.8	1.9	(3)	1.0	4.5	(2)	2.6
About the same	39.7	(3)	67.9	48.1	(2)	71.7	27.3	(1)	59.2
Totals	100.0%		100.0%	100.0%		100.0%	100.0%		100.0%
	(73)	(8)	(109)	(52)	(7)	(99)	(66)	(4)	(76)
		(190)			(158)			(146)	

NOTE ON READING THE DATA: Observe that 190 pastors, 158 ministers of education, and 146 directors of missions participated in both polls. Looking only at the 190 pastors involved, observe that for December 1978, 73 pastors reported "more favorable" attitudes, 8 reported "less favorable" attitudes, and 109 reported that attitudes were "about the same." Of the 73 pastors who reported "more favorable" attitudes in December, 1978, 58.9 percent reported "more favorable" attitudes in February, 1980 (which would tend to indicate that attitudes are moving consistently in a positive direction), 1.4 percent reported "less favorable" (which would tend to indicate that attitudes are moving in a negative direction), and 39.7 percent reported "about the same" (which would tend to indicate that the favorable attitudes of December, 1978 are stable in February, 1980). The rest of the data can be read in the same way that the pastor data has been presented.

other similar food programs (21.4%). The most prominent responses made by directors of missions were: designed contributions to hunger problems (79.7%); food closet (53.5%); SBC World Hunger Day service (52.9%); Meals-on-Wheels or other similar food program (29.9%); and Miss-A-Meal program for contributions to hunger problems (24.8%).

There is some evidence in the data that churches east of the Mississippi River are more heavily involved in designated contributions to hunger problems than are those west of the River.

- D. When panel members were asked what level of priority they would like to see the SBC place on the hunger issue, the majority (51.0%) of the directors of missions and the largest portion of the pastors (42.2%) and ministers of education (38.8%) would like to see the SBC place a "significant priority" on the hunger issue. Just over one third (37.0%) of the panel would like to see the SBC place "some priority" on the hunger issue, while 10.6 percent would like to see a "high priority" placed on the issue. Cross tabulation data reveals that not one pastor of a church with 1,000 or more members would like to see the SBC place a "high priority" on the hunger issue. At the same time, not one of these pastors would deny the issue some priority.
- E. According to the majority of the pastors (53.4%) and ministers of education (51.6%) who responded to the poll, whether a divorced person should serve on a local church staff depends "on the circumstances." The largest portion (47.8%) of the directors of missions would concur in this judgement.

There is evidence in the data that pastors serving in "new"* SBC states are more open to divorced persons serving on the local church staff than are their counterparts in "old" SBC states.

Panel members were also asked to indicate what the feeling would be in their congregations (churches in their associations in the case of directors of missions) about a divorced person serving on the local church staff, and the results were slightly different from those

* See Appendix for list of "Old" and "New" SBC states.

reported earlier for individuals' feelings. Panel members indicate that their congregations/churches would tend to be more opposed to divorced persons on the local church staff than they would be.

The table below depicts the relationship between panel members' own feelings about a divorced person serving on a local church staff and how they perceive their churches would view the matter. The data depicts a strong tendency for pastors to see their congregations as sharing their own viewpoint, while this tendency for ministers of education and directors of missions is less pronounced.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PANEL MEMBERS' OWN FEELINGS ABOUT DIVORCED PERSONS SERVING ON A LOCAL CHURCH STAFF,
AND THEIR VIEW OF THEIR CHURCHES' FEELINGS

Churches Feelings as Viewed by Panel Members	PANEL MEMBERS' FEELINGS																	
	Pastors						Ministers of Education						Directors of Missions					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
Definitely opposed	57.9%	29.4%	- %	11.8%	4.8%	7.6%	76.4%	52.9%	(1)	21.2%	9.6%	14.3%	64.3%	18.2%	- %	- %	- %	12.0%
Somewhat opposed	15.8	52.9	-	29.4	19.0	16.0	11.8	23.5	(1)	45.5	28.6	23.6	21.5	50.0	(1)	(5)	(1)	22.7
No position	15.8	5.9	(3)	5.9	-	4.2	-	5.9	(1)	-	4.8	0.7	-	-	-	-	-	2.7
Somewhat open to idea	-	-	-	47.0	14.3	5.0	5.9	5.9	-	18.2	28.3	3.6	7.1	4.6	-	(2)	(2)	6.7
Very open to idea	5.3	-	-	-	47.6	1.7	-	-	-	-	9.6	-	-	-	-	-	(2)	-
Depends on circum- stances	-	11.8	-	-	9.5	61.3	5.9	11.8	-	15.1	14.3	55.0	7.1	22.7	-	(3)	(2)	50.6
Not indicated	5.2	-	(1)	5.9	4.8	4.2	-	-	-	-	4.8	2.8	-	4.5	-	(1)	-	5.3
Totals	100.0%	100.0%		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%				100.0%
	(19)	(17)	(4)	(17)	(21)	(119)	(17)	(17)	(3)	(33)	(21)	(140)	(14)	(22)	(1)	(11)	(7)	(75)

Code for table headings:

- 1 = Definitely opposed
- 2 = Somewhat opposed
- 3 = No position
- 4 = Somewhat open to idea
- 5 = Very open to idea
- 6 = Depends on circumstances

NOTE: Circled percentages indicate points at which panel members' feelings about divorced persons serving on a local church staff and their view of the churches' feelings coincide.

HIGHLIGHTS BEYOND THIS POINT ARE BASED ON RESPONSES FROM ONLY PASTORS AND
MINISTERS OF EDUCATION.

- F. Sixty percent (59.7%) of the churches represented in the poll do not have a systematic way to train personal witnesses.

Cross tabulation data reveals three tendencies related to this area: (1) churches with 1,000 or more members are more likely than smaller churches to have a training program in this area; (2) churches in "new" SBC states are more likely to have a program than are those in "old" SBC states; and (3) churches west of the Mississippi River are more likely to have a program than are those located east of the River.

- G. Sixteen percent of the churches represented in the poll have conducted a Lay Evangelism School (WIN school) within the last two years.

- H. The majority (58.7%) of the churches represented in the poll do not have a ministry to any specific language culture groups. The churches most represented in the above group are located in "old"* SBC states east of the Mississippi River.

Fifteen percent of the churches represented have a ministry to Asians, while 14.2 percent have a ministry to Hispanics. Also, 13.4 percent have a ministry to the deaf.

* See Appendix for list of "Old" and "New" SBC states.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. Has your church/association been involved in a World Missions Conference (4-8 day series of missionary speakers) in the last five years?

	<u>Pastors</u>	<u>Ministers of Education</u>	<u>Directors of Missions</u>
Yes	57.0%	46.1%	73.2%
No	42.6	53.2	25.5
Not indicated	<u>0.4</u>	<u>0.7</u>	<u>1.3</u>
Totals	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	(223)	(271)	(157)

If "Yes," to what degree did it have a positive influence on . . .

	<u>None</u>			<u>Little</u>			<u>Some</u>			<u>Much</u>			<u>Not indicated</u>			<u>Totals</u>		
	<u>P</u>	<u>ME</u>	<u>DOM</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>ME</u>	<u>DOM</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>ME</u>	<u>DOM</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>ME</u>	<u>DOM</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>ME</u>	<u>DOM</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>ME</u>	<u>DOM</u>
mission giving?	4.7%	10.4%	- %	19.7%	19.2%	10.4%	56.7%	52.0%	58.3%	17.3%	10.4%	21.7%	1.6%	8.0%	9.6%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
one or more persons com- mitted to missionary service?	64.6	51.2	20.0	9.4	20.8	17.4	13.4	18.4	39.1	5.5	1.6	8.7	7.1	8.0	14.8	100.0	100.0	100.0
attendance at mission organ- izations (WMU, Brotherhood, etc.)?	22.0	26.4	7.8	37.8	39.2	34.8	26.8	27.2	38.3	8.7	1.6	6.1	4.7	5.6	13.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
local mission involvement?	17.3	19.2	2.6	30.7	32.0	20.9	37.1	36.8	48.7	11.8	6.4	16.5	3.1	5.6	11.3	100.0	100.0	100.0
																(127)	(125)	(115)

2. Would you say that attitudes in your church/association toward the Cooperative Program are more favorable, less favorable, or about the same as they were this time last year?

	<u>Pastors</u>	<u>Ministers of Education</u>	<u>Directors of Missions</u>
More favorable	41.7%	32.8%	51.6%
Less favorable	2.7	3.7	4.5
About the same	54.7	63.1	42.0
Not indicated.	<u>0.9</u>	<u>0.4</u>	<u>1.9</u>
Totals	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	(223)	(271)	(157)

If more or less favorable, please share why. (Voluntary Responses)

More Favorable

More publicity, promotion, education of the congregation.	20.4%	30.3%	23.5%
Bold Mission Thrust--involvement in Bold Mission, emphasis on Bold Mission, etc..	8.6	4.5	11.1
The annual emphasis to increase Cooperative Program support. . . .	10.8	14.6	9.9
Greater concern for/involvement in the urgent needs of the community/ beyond the community	11.8	6.9	11.1
Churches are seeing things being accomplished through their giving	14.0	10.1	14.8
World Missions Conferences/state wide revivals.	2.1	1.1	4.9
Pastoral/other leadership.	16.1	9.0	9.8
Personal involvement of the director of missions	-	-	4.9
Commitment of the people	5.4	10.2	-
Using "Missionary Moments" in worship.	3.3	-	-
Other.	6.5	12.3	3.7
Not indicated	<u>24.7</u>	<u>13.5</u>	<u>25.9</u>
Totals	*	*	*
	(93)	(89)	(81)

*Percents do not add to 100.0 due to multiple answers.

2. (continued)

If more or less favorable, please share why. (Voluntary Responses)

<u>Less favorable</u>	<u>Pastors</u>	<u>Ministers of Education</u>	<u>Directors of Missions</u>
Dissatisfaction with the way some of the money is being spent.	(5)	(2)	(3)
Dissatisfied with the direction that the state leadership is going . . .	(1)	-	(2)
Dissatisfied with a particular Baptist school.	-	-	(2)
Inflation/economic conditions	-	(3)	(1)
A feeling that the Cooperative Program is not working because special offerings are needed so much.	-	-	(1)
The non-scriptural things in the Convention's schools.	-	(1)	-
Increased building programs and personnel costs	-	(1)	-
Loss of pastor, general apathy and no sense of purpose	-	(1)	-
Other	-	(1)	-
Not indicated	<u>-</u>	<u>(1)</u>	<u>-</u>
Totals			*
	(6)	(10)	(7)

*Does not add to 7 due to multiple answers.

3. Please indicate below all of the ways your church (churches in your association have) has related to hunger issues. (Please check all that apply.)

	<u>Pastors</u>	<u>Ministers of Education</u>	<u>Directors of Missions</u>
No specific involvement with hunger issues	27.8%	12.9%	5.7%
SBC World Hunger Day service	28.3	28.0	52.9
Designated contributions to hunger problems.	36.8	55.4	79.7
Food closet.	32.7	48.0	53.5
Meals-on Wheels or other similar food program	10.8	21.4	29.9
Study group or task force on hunger.	2.7	8.5	11.5
Assisting persons in obtaining food stamps.	17.9	18.1	15.9
Miss-A-Meal program for contributions to hunger problems	7.2	9.2	24.8
Other (Voluntary Responses):			
Special offerings.	1.8	4.4	3.8
Rice Bowl Promotion.	3.1	2.2	1.9
Relocating of refugees	0.4	0.7	0.6
Direct assistance to those in need	2.7	5.5	-
Planned famine/fast.	0.4	0.7	-
Skate-a-thon for world hunger.	0.4	0.7	-
Budget item.	-	0.7	-
Bike-a-thon.	0.9	-	-
Hunger banks for each family	0.4	-	-
Other.	5.4	5.2	0.6
Not indicated.	<u>3.1</u>	<u>0.7</u>	<u>0.6</u>
Totals	*	*	*
	(223)	(271)	(157)

*Percents do not add to 100.0 due to multiple answers.

4. What level of priority would you like to see the SBC place on the hunger issue?

	<u>Pastors</u>	<u>Ministers of Education</u>	<u>Directors of Missions</u>	<u>Total</u>
High priority	11.2%	10.3%	10.2%	10.6%
Significant priority.	42.2	38.8	51.0	42.9
Some priority	38.6	38.7	31.8	37.0
Low priority.	4.9	8.9	6.4	6.9
None.	1.3	1.5	-	1.1
Not indicated	<u>1.8</u>	<u>1.8</u>	<u>0.6</u>	<u>1.5</u>
Totals	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	(223)	(271)	(157)	(651)

5. What are your personal feelings about a divorced person serving on a local church staff?

Definitely opposed to it.	8.5%	6.3%	8.9%	7.7%
Somewhat opposed to it.	7.6	6.3	14.0	8.6
Do not have a position.	1.8	1.1	0.6	1.2
Somewhat open to the idea	7.6	12.2	7.0	9.4
Very open to the idea	9.4	7.7	4.5	7.5
It would depend on the circumstances	53.4	51.6	47.8	51.3
Not indicated	<u>11.7</u>	<u>14.8</u>	<u>17.2</u>	<u>14.3</u>
Totals	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	(223)	(271)	(157)	(651)

6. In your opinion, what would be the feeling in your congregation (churches in your association) about a divorced person serving on the local church staff?

Very open to the idea	6.7%	0.7%	1.3%
Somewhat open to the idea	9.0	7.7	7.6
Do not have a position.	5.8	1.8	1.3
Somewhat opposed to it.	19.7	26.9	26.1
Definitely opposed to it.	13.5	21.0	16.6
It would depend on the circumstances	36.3	35.6	33.1
Not indicated	<u>9.0</u>	<u>6.3</u>	<u>14.0</u>
Totals	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	(223)	(271)	(157)

QUESTIONS 7-9 WERE ASKED ONLY OF PASTORS AND MINISTERS OF EDUCATION.

7. Does your church have a systematic way to train personal witnesses?

	<u>Pastors</u>	<u>Ministers of Education</u>	<u>Total</u>
Yes	36.8%	39.1%	38.1%
No.	60.5	59.1	59.7
Not indicated	<u>2.7</u>	<u>1.8</u>	<u>2.2</u>
Totals	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	(223)	(271)	(494)

8. Has your church conducted a Lay Evangelism School (WIN school) within the last two years?

Yes	15.7%	16.2%	16.0%
No.	82.1	82.7	82.4
Not indicated	<u>2.2</u>	<u>1.1</u>	<u>1.6</u>
Totals	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	(223)	(271)	(494)

9. Please indicate below any specific language culture groups to which your church ministers.

None.	66.8%	52.0%	58.7%
Hispanic.	13.5	14.8	14.2
Asian	9.0	19.9	15.0
European.	1.3	5.9	3.9
American Indian	1.8	2.2	2.0
Middle Eastern.	2.2	7.0	4.9
Caribbean	0.4	1.5	1.0
Deaf.	6.7	18.8	13.4
Other:			
International ministry.	0.4	0.4	0.4
African	-	0.4	0.2
Not indicated	<u>7.2</u>	<u>4.4</u>	<u>5.5</u>
Totals	*	*	*
	(223)	(271)	(494)

*Percents do not add to 100.0 due to multiple answers.

APPENDIX

LIST OF "OLD" AND "NEW" SBC STATES

"OLD" SBC STATES

Alabama
Arkansas
Florida
Georgia
Kentucky
Louisiana
Mississippi
Missouri
North Carolina
Oklahoma
South Carolina
Tennessee
Texas
Virginia

"NEW" SBC STATES

Alaska
Arizona
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New York
North Dakota
Ohio
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Dakota
Utah
Vermont
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming