

Mississippi Baptists keep on giving even during economic unsteadiness

By William Perkins
Editor

Mississippi Baptists kept their focus on consistent giving to Kingdom work in a year that was marked by the advancing COVID-19 pandemic and other economic upheavals, according to the Executive Director-Treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB).



Parker

“We fully expected to see some financial impact because of COVID, but that simply didn’t materialize. In fact, we saw our churches demonstrate unusual generosity in light of the circumstances,” said Shawn Parker.

“I’m happy to share with all our Mississippi Baptist churches that the work of missions and ministry in Mississippi and around the world is continuing at full-speed because of your faithfulness,” he reported. “Thanks so much for keeping your hands to the plow!”

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Because of financial concerns over the country's economic health going into the second year of the pandemic and the potential effects that could have on giving, the 2021 Mississippi Cooperative Program budget was conservatively set at \$28,510,346 by the Convention Board, which gave final approval in lieu of the 2020 Mississippi Baptist Convention annual meeting which was not held due to the pandemic.

By the end of the fiscal year on Dec. 31, Mississippi Baptists had given a total of \$33,757,572 to the Mississippi Cooperative Program – \$5,247,226 or 18.4% above the approved budget.

“Thankfully, we'd already decided to allocate any overages to our Southern Baptist Convention and state partners on a pro-rata basis, but this still left about \$1.8 million that was designated for programming led by the MBCB staff,” Parker explained.

“We wanted every Cooperative Program dollar to be used for missions and ministry in some way, he said, “so the Convention Board decided at their December meeting to allocate the MBCB's portion of 2021's Challenge Funds according to the following percentages:

- 40% to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions;
- 20% to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions;
- 20% to establish a Mission:Dignity® fund to provide additional support for Mississippi recipients; and
- 20% to our two Mississippi Baptist camps which suffered significant financial strain over the last two years because of the pandemic.”

Mission:Dignity® is a ministry begun by GuideStone Financial

Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention that seeks to supplement the income of retired Southern Baptist ministers, workers, and widows struggling to meet basic needs.

Mississippi Baptists' camps are Garaywa Camp and Conference Center in Clinton and Central Hills Baptist Retreat in Attala County. Almost all of 2020's and a significant portion of 2021's programs planned for the camps were postponed or cancelled.

For more information on the 2021 Cooperative Program distribution, contact Barri Shirley, Chief Operating Officer in the MBCB business office, at bshirley@mbcb.org. Telephone: (601) 292-3240.