**Let's Bring Back Training Union**
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Over the past few years I have lamented the lack of interest shown by Southern Baptists today as to missions education.

My generation and above grew up with Royal Ambassadors, Girls in Action, Acteens, and other missions organizations.

We were taught missions, learned about the work of Southern Baptist missionaries, and were taught that we supported those missionaries through the Cooperative Program.

Missions was a part of our DNA "back in the day."

Today, especially in larger churches, you will get a blank stare if you mention these missions organizations, or better yet, if you just use the abbreviations such as RAs and GAs.

We have strayed from our roots and are reaping the consequences.

During the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention held two weeks ago in Houston, Southern Baptists passed a resolution on "Tithing, Stewardship, and the Cooperative Program."

This is 2013. Do we really need an SBC resolution reminding us the need for being good stewards?

Unfortunately, yes we do.

The resolution notes that biblical stewardship "is a generous response of loving obedience that constitutes an essential part of our worship of God." It goes on to give both Old and New Testament verses that affirm tithing.

The resolution states that "proportional giving of at least a tithe is expected by God throughout Scripture" and that tithing "is essential for kingdom work through the local church and ministries around the world."

According to the resolution and echoed by Frank Page, president of the SBC Executive Committee, Southern Baptists give just 2.5 percent of their annual income to the local church.

I'm not a mathematician, but even I know that is one-fourth of what it should be.

The resolution stated that CP giving from churches declined from $548 million in 2007-08 to $488 million in 2010-11, reducing support for missions and ministries by $60 million.

In addition, TBC Executive Director Randy C. Davis observed in his Clarity column in last week's issue that Cooperative Program giving has declined from 10.52 percent in 1987 to 5.41 percent in 2011.

So, yes, a resolution was needed.

I relate the decrease in tithing and Cooperative Program support directly to lack of education.

As a kid I remember going to my small country church in Travelers Rest, S.C., every Sunday evening for Training Union (now Discipleship Training).

In Training Union, we learned about Southern Baptist doctrines and the Cooperative Program.

Like missions education, the need to give was instilled in those who attended Training Union.

Somewhere along the way, unnamed (and unknown) Southern Baptist leaders decided we didn't need that basic education anymore. Training Union became ancient history and missions organizations have struggled ever since.

I'm not blaming anyone because I honestly don't know who is to blame. But I think there is a direct correlation in those Southern Baptist staples of Training Union and missions organizations with giving patterns.

With them in place, Southern Baptists gave. Without them, we are not giving nearly as much.

That is simplistic. There are other factors involved, but a decreased emphasis on education about tithing and the Cooperative Program is a definite factor as to why we are struggling today to have sufficient funds to do the ministry God has called us to do.

The resolution calls on Southern Baptists to "tithe cheerfully" to their local churches.

I pray that Southern Baptists will do just that. I have heard it from more than one source that Southern Baptists don't have a money problem. They have a heart problem.

That is so true. Let's get our hearts right and give God what He deserves with our  tithes and offerings.

And, while we are at it, let's consider reviving Training Union and RAs and GAs. I think we wrote them off as dead way too early.

We have raised a generation that "knows not Joseph" and now the Cooperative Program is "reaping what we have sown."