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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FMB discusses relocation;  
adopts "status quo" budget**

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RICHMOND, Va. (ABP) — Trustees of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in their Oct. 8-10 meeting discussed the merits of moving their headquarters and adopted a "status quo" 1991 budget of \$182 million.

The actions came during the trustee meeting, in which directors also appointed 48 new overseas personnel, voted to send missionaries to Bulgaria, held a dialogue with pastors from across the nation, clarified policy on mission service by divorced persons and received a report endorsing continued open and unbiased news reporting by its communications staff.

The motion concerning criteria for a possible relocation of the FMB — which has been in Richmond since the founding of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845 — was introduced by Ron E. Wilson, a pastor from Thousand Oaks, Calif., who said he was not seeking to have the board moved but was only calling for a committee to "develop the criteria which the board would use to decide the merits of moving the Foreign Mission Board."

When the motion came to the floor, Wilson asked that it be tabled until the Dec. 10-12 trustee meeting because it might be perceived as "political."

After the board meeting, a key fundamental-conservative member of the board, Paige Patterson, president of Criswell College in Dallas, dropped a hint the move might be aimed at Virginia Baptists, particularly if they alter their support of the denomination's unified giving plan, the Cooperative Program.

Patterson, a major architect in the 12-year-old fundamental-conservative effort to take control of the convention, told a Richmond, Va., reporter, "If Virginia Baptists take precipitous action to hurt the Cooperative Program, they (agency trustees) might be advised to consider whether to keep the agency in that kind of milieu."

Messengers to the annual meeting of the Baptist General Association of Virginia in November will consider a budget proposal which would reduce by half undesignated contributions to the Cooperative Program. It would allocate the other half to specified Baptist causes, including the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and Associated Baptist Press.

Wilson, considered a Patterson ally on the board, denied his motion was a reaction to the Virginia proposal. Instead, he cited concerns with the safety of the board's Monument Avenue neighborhood, the efficiency of the 30-year-old building, the lack of adequate air travel to Richmond, the need for a more central location to "communicate with the convention's constituency" and lack of meeting space.

"My proposal has nothing to do with Virginia politics," he told the Religious Herald, news journal of the BGAV.

Other observers, however, said they believe denominational politics is more of a factor than the lack of meeting space.

Because the board is located in Virginia, it has more local members from the state than from any other state. Fundamental-conservatives privately say they believe Virginia Baptists wield too much influence on the mission board.

The president of the BGAV, Raymond Spence, pastor of Second Baptist Church in Richmond, said he perceived the action and Patterson's comments as a threat.

"I think it's a subtle threat to Virginia Baptists, no matter how veiled they would like to put it. I'm sorry the board's leadership feels that they need to threaten Virginia Baptists when Virginia Baptists are in no way trying to be a threat to the Southern Baptist Convention."

The 1991 budget of \$182,760,000 represents a 4.5 percent increase over 1990. Board President R. Keith Parks said the increase is not enough.

(More)

"The numbers in this budget will maintain the status quo but provide very little for growth," he said. "Therefore, these numbers should serve as a challenge to all Southern Baptists to give more generously.

He said there is a disparity between budget dollars and missions needs and called on Southern Baptists to rise above the bitter 12-year denominational fight.

"These (budget) figures mean that we must not allow any differences, whether political or interpretive, to erode missions support."

Prior to the meeting of trustees, a group of about 100 pastors from across the SBC was invited to the Richmond offices to get an overview of the evangelistic and church-planting aims of the FMB. Of those invited, 41 attended.

Trustee chairman Bill Hancock, pastor of Highview Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky., conceived the idea of the pastor dialogue, which featured participation by SBC President Morris Chapman, pastor of First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, Texas.

During the dialogue session, several pastors raised fears about the directions the board may take under the fundamental-conservatives now in control of the SBC.

One, Scott Walker, pastor of First Baptist Church, Charleston, S.C., who grew up in the Philippines as the son of missionaries and is himself a former summer missionary to Liberia, said he was uncertain if he could be appointed as a missionary "because I might have a slight difference of opinion with other brothers and sisters in our convention over certain interpretations" such as the biblical book of Genesis.

Parks responded: "We have not changed the qualifications for mission appointment. Our approach, for as long as I've known anything about missions, has been ... that any authentic Southern Baptist who loves the Lord, is called of God, who wants to be a part of reaching the world for Christ is eligible for appointment as a missionary."

Chapman told participants he has a commitment to listen, learn and pray as he interacts with those who disagree with him, and said he wants "to lead this convention beyond the perceptions or reality of political coalitions."

But while acknowledging his promise to "enlarge the tent," he added: "You need to hear very carefully that, again and again, I have also indicated the parameters of that tent.

"I have a deep and abiding conviction about the holy Word of God. I do, unapologetically, and with all of my heart, believe this Bible to be the inspired, infallible, inerrant Word of God .... It is not, with me, a matter of theological debate. It is a matter that I serve a perfect God. And the only way I can reason in my faith ... is that a perfect God would have done no less than deposit a perfect word on this earth."

In reference to mission service for divorced people, trustees approved a recommendation that further defined the policy for selecting overseas personnel.

Last February the trustees reaffirmed the long standing policy that divorced people cannot be appointed as career or associate missionaries.

In the October meeting, they voted to remove the requirement that divorced people must provide their own funding for assignments of two years or less through the International Service Corps. Previously, the policy had been to allow divorced people to serve in ISC roles other than pastoral or theological education assignments if they provided their own funding.

Just prior to adjournment, the board approved without discussion or opposition appointment of a special committee "to review policy matters."

Chairman Hancock said the chairman's council — board officers and committee chairs — recommended the committee to consider policy matters which have been referred to council.

Later he said he would "rather not comment" on the nature of the policy matters, but when pressed said they had to do with the "relationship between trustees and staff" and "two or three minor, minor theological matters which have been brought up."

He said they were not directed at Parks and described them as "nothing of a critical nature."

In his concluding statement, Hancock said, "there are two or three items hanging fire right now that need to be responded to. We need to respond in orderly ways to eliminate rumors that cause people to do things on their own."

He told reporters the "two or three things" have to do with a statement of faith for the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland, and with the board's response to an anticipated increase in designated gifts to foreign missions from moderate-conservatives seeking to bypass the SBC Cooperative Program.

The seminary at Ruschlikon was founded in 1949 by the FMB, but ownership was transferred to European Baptists in 1988. The transfer was accompanied with a set of recommendations, among which was a request for the seminary board to "consider the possibility of a written statement of European Baptist principles ... which may give expression to the seminary's biblical commitment and to which seminary teachers would subscribe.

Consideration of such a statement has been slowed by European Baptists' traditional aversion to creeds and the theological and social diversity among Baptist unions in Europe.

At the October board meeting, some trustees expressed frustration at what they view as a lack of progress, while others encouraged the board to give Ruschlikon more time.

Hancock sided with those who want action: "It's been two years (since the recommendation was presented). We've given them plenty of time."

The FMB provides an annual subsidy to the seminary, this year amounting to about \$340,000, or about 25 percent of the seminary's operating budget. After 1992, the subsidy is expected to be phased out.

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(This story was compiled by ABP Interim News Director Dan Martin from information provided by the news and information staff of the Foreign Mission Board; Robert Dilday, associate editor, [Virginia] *Religious Herald*; Ed Briggs, religion editor, *Richmond Times-Dispatch* and Thomas Mullen, staff writer, *Richmond News Leader*.)

### Committee members differ on Southern's use of report

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by Dan Martin and Marv Knox

ROANOKE, Va. (ABP) — The 1987 report of the Southern Baptist Convention Peace Committee was not intended to be a "creedal supplement," but it was intended to be taken as a whole, Chairman Charles Fuller said.

Fuller and three other Peace Committee members — whose viewpoints represent the diversity of the group — spoke about the report in the wake of action by trustees of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., to use the report as a guideline for hiring and promoting faculty.

The interpretation of Fuller, pastor of First Baptist Church of Roanoke, Va., was similar to that of Jerry Vines, pastor of First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla. It differed from the interpretations of Herschel Hobbs, pastor emeritus of First Baptist Church of Oklahoma City, and Daniel Vestal, pastor of Dunwoody Baptist Church in suburban Atlanta.

In a called meeting Sept. 24, Southern Seminary trustees adopted a recommendation that says: "In addition to existing guidelines, the Peace Committee report — both the findings and recommendations — serve as a guideline for the employment of temporary and permanent faculty, the promotion of existing faculty and the granting of tenure."

The findings section of the report says "most Baptists believe" that "Adam and Eve were real people," "named authors did indeed write the biblical books attributed to them," miracles "did indeed occur as supernatural events in history" and "historical narratives given by biblical authors are indeed accurate and reliable."

The recommendations section calls on SBC institutions "to build their professional staffs and faculties from those who clearly reflect such dominant convictions and beliefs held by Southern Baptists at large."

A decision to make the findings section of the report binding on any SBC institution would be an apparent contradiction to bylaw 33 of the SBC constitution. It says, "The adoption of recommendations contained in reports to the convention shall not bind the convention on any other matters in the body of reports; but the convention reserves the right to consider and amend the body of all reports."

Fuller, in a letter sent in response to inquiries by four Southern Seminary trustees and made available to Associated Baptist Press, said that when the report was presented to the 1987 SBC annual meeting: "I was instructed to say that we felt the entire report had equal importance. Because our recommendations were based on our findings, we felt one without the other would be either incomplete or confusing."

(More)

He added: " We determined there was no need for any statement of faith other than the Baptist Faith and Message (a confessional statement adopted by the SBC in 1925 and revised in 1963). Therefore, we resisted the idea of drafting anything which would be viewed as a creedal supplement.

"Our struggle was over how various Southern Baptists interpreted the (Baptist Faith and Message) statement that the scriptures have '...truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter.'

"It was that discussion which led to the findings. (The) four examples (are) the position we believed most Southern Baptists would take if asked what they felt was the meaning of 'truth without mixture of error' when applied to the nature and origin of the Bible. The four examples are not designed to be the first four statements of an unfinished, unpublished list of other such statements. Neither were they designed to be a specific checklist as much as they were given to define what we felt was a majority view of the Bible among rank-and-file Southern Baptists."

The definitions were offered to describe the "type of theological conservative we felt needed to be recognized, legitimized and given rightful positions on agency staffs and seminary faculties," Fuller said.

In an interview with ABP, Fuller said he knew only what he had read about the Southern Seminary action.

"From what I read, it appears the trustees were trying to honor not only the recommendations but the spirit of the recommendations," he noted. "I still believe the Peace Committee report is a good report, but it must be applied and carried out in its entirety, or it is unbalanced."

Hobbs, who chaired the committee that wrote the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message statement, said he does not believe the findings were intended to have equal weight with the recommendations.

In fact, he said, he opposed a last-meeting attempt to move the four items from the findings to the recommendations section.

"I hit the floor," he said. "Where it (the four-part theological statement) is, it's information; ... you move it to a recommendation, it becomes creedal."

He compared the findings to an SBC resolution, which states the opinion of people present and voting at a particular meeting. The recommendations are more like an SBC motion, which is binding on SBC institutions, he added.

"My own judgment is that to take the statement from the findings and enforce it as if it were a motion would be an abuse of it, not a use of it," Hobbs said.

Application of the report should be made only to future faculty, not any present members, he noted: "There was no intention of purging present faculty members. And as a stipulation for advancement, that was not the intent of the committee."

Vines, immediate past president of the SBC, said seminary trustees' use the report "is just a logical next step in the whole process (of turning the SBC in a more conservative direction). I am very pleased with the trustee action."

The four illustrations are to be understood "as guidelines," he added. "They certainly are not exhaustive, but illustrative."

Vines said the Peace Committee discussed at length whether to include the illustration in the recommendations section, but when "there was agreement the illustrations carried equal weight with the recommendations, we voted for the report."

Daniel Vestal, who is chair of "the fellowship," a moderate SBC coalition, said: "On the surface, what the trustees did appears to the layman or average pastor to be good, but in fact it is damaging to the long-term health of the institution.

"Using the four illustrations of scripture to prove orthodoxy makes a person confess his faith and belief in the authority of scriptures by agreeing to a certain interpretation.

"This makes the Peace Committee report exactly what we said it would not become — a creed and litmus test of orthodoxy. When you add these things, you narrow in such a way as to become creedal rather than confessional."

## Cooperative Program grows 2.46 percent

ABP  
10/11/90

Nashville (ABP) — Southern Baptists contributed a record \$140.7 million to their convention-wide budget during the 1989-90 fiscal year, which ended Sept 30.

The Cooperative Program budget helps support 18 Southern Baptist convention organizations that conduct evangelistic, missionary and educational ministries around the world.

The program received \$140,710,282 in 1989-90, an increase of \$3,377,759 over the 1988-89 budget, reported Harold C. Bennett, president and treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee, which disperses the money. That gain is a 2.46 percent increase. It means a decrease in spending power, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The Bureau has determined the cost of living rose 5.6 percent in the United States for the 12-month period that ended Aug 31.

The Cooperative Program's receipts topped its 1989-90 basic operating goal by \$5,922,739, Bennett noted.

Of the overage, \$2,431,880 was spent to retire the debt on the SBC Building in Nashville, Bennett said. The building, which houses eight SBC organizations, was completed in early 1985.

The balance of the overage was divided between the 18 recipients of the budget in the same proportion as they received basic operating allocations, he added.

"I am absolutely delighted by the 2.4 percent increase over the budget a year ago," Bennett said, noting estimates indicated the gain would be about 2 percent.

"Southern Baptists are continuing to be concerned about supporting world missions through the Cooperative Program and will give strong support to it."

The Cooperative Program has become a focal point in the SBC's 12-year old controversy.

Some moderates, who say they have been excluded from meaningful participation in the convention by conservatives in control of its agencies, have begun designating or escrowing their national contributions to the program. Some of them have organized a national mechanism, the Baptist Cooperative Missions Program, Inc., to disperse money to SBC agencies without channeling it through the Executive Committee.

Some conservatives, meanwhile, have accused the moderates of sabotaging the convention's missions-funding mechanism. They have condemned escrowing or designating funds and called for increased Cooperative Program giving.

"The effect of the financial skirmish has not been determined," Bennett said. Designated receipts — two missions offerings as well as designated gifts and other special contributions — were up only 3.9 percent, he noted.

"We have not been impacted as yet by any withholding or designations to any degree," he said. "A quarter from now, we may see a trend. It will have to be after the Baptist state conventions (in November) before we see appreciable changes occurring."

The goal for the current Cooperative Program basic operating budget is \$137,332,523. Any overage will be divided 50-50 between a "program advance" component, which distributes funds proportionately to the 18 recipients, and a "capital needs" component, which will go toward meeting \$22 million in building fund commitments the convention has made to some agencies.

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(Information for this story was contributed for ABP by Marv Knox, editor, [Kentucky] Western Recorder)

## SBC TODAY to begin twice-monthly publication

ABP  
10/11/90

ATLANTA (ABP) — Beginning in November, SBC TODAY will be published on a twice-monthly schedule.

The board of directors voted Oct. 4 to employ Amy Greene as an associate editor, and to launch a \$125,000 fund-raising campaign to finance the expansion.

"This is a major step of faith for SBC TODAY," said editor Jack U. Harwell. "But so many of our readers have asked us to move to twice-monthly publication, we felt we had no choice. Harwell anticipates a "major increase in circulation" because of the action.

Greene, 31, who currently edits the spirituality page for the paper, is a former pastor of Wayfarer's Baptist Chapel, Atlanta.

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COMPARISON RECEIPTS  
SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
OCTOBER, 1989 - SEPTEMBER, 1990

	COOPERATIVE PROGRAM			DESIGNATED		
	1989-90	1988-89	Change	1989-90	1988-89	Change
Specials	694,345	568,788	22.07%	337,164	294,142	14.63%
Alabama	10,700,873	10,350,307	3.39%	9,821,783	9,365,122	4.88%
Alaska	170,496	150,090	13.60%	188,137	179,824	4.62%
Arizona	575,144	768,554	( 25.17%)	744,817	641,400	16.12%
Arkansas	5,584,425	5,272,951	5.91%	3,885,820	3,787,556	2.59%
California	1,661,460	1,578,122	5.28%	1,960,240	1,961,173	( .05%)
Colorado	260,273	277,621	( 6.25%)	369,932	446,739	( 17.19%)
D.C.	154,207	130,380	18.28%	118,497	122,579	( 3.33%)
Florida	11,199,390	11,532,460	( 2.89%)	7,183,798	7,134,790	.69%
Georgia	15,080,580	15,435,865	( 2.30%)	10,789,686	10,560,028	2.17%
Hawaii	198,861	175,043	13.61%	224,755	188,111	19.48%
Illinois	1,820,277	1,823,554	( .18%)	1,319,684	1,294,005	1.98%
Indiana	483,162	471,902	2.39%	432,244	421,735	2.49%
Kan.-Neb.	513,932	495,258	3.77%	555,155	537,887	3.21%
Kentucky	6,621,991	6,365,871	4.02%	4,415,769	4,498,168	( 1.83%)
Louisiana	5,353,534	5,163,053	3.69%	3,975,852	3,714,419	7.04%
Maryland	1,311,002	1,163,108	12.72%	958,347	943,817	1.54%
Michigan	346,753	243,520	42.39%	256,139	215,708	18.74%
Minn.-Wisc	72,802	71,718	1.51%	97,917	90,216	8.54%
Mississippi	7,009,484	6,934,555	1.08%	7,092,252	6,812,724	4.10%
Missouri	5,229,850	5,021,666	4.15%	4,169,005	4,063,519	2.60%
Nevada	107,867	94,500	14.14%	113,230	114,363	( .99%)
New England	98,790	93,029	6.19%	156,385	152,331	2.66%
New Mexico	748,763	732,261	2.25%	859,102	814,495	5.48%
New York	141,920	134,424	5.58%	256,330	238,729	7.37%
North Carolina	9,187,700	9,159,456	.31%	14,303,886	13,762,705	3.93%
Northwest	500,513	459,950	8.82%	426,263	413,020	3.21%
Ohio	1,268,503	1,286,730	( 1.42%)	733,060	730,168	.40%
Oklahoma	7,229,537	7,013,694	3.08%	4,331,697	3,957,137	9.47%
Penn.-S. Jersey	169,217	159,427	6.14%	242,154	196,686	23.12%
South Carolina	8,766,671	8,245,113	6.33%	8,476,919	8,319,706	1.89%
Tennessee	8,904,051	8,669,219	2.71%	8,905,932	8,408,150	5.92%
Texas	22,507,189	21,184,872	6.24%	20,022,692	18,815,295	6.42%
Utah-Idaho	69,835	64,001	9.12%	93,053	99,611	( 6.58%)
Virginia	5,644,575	5,741,762	( 1.69%)	6,597,511	6,473,079	1.92%
West Virginia	150,792	147,733	2.07%	172,002	152,848	12.53%
Wyoming	62,586	53,261	17.51%	84,888	73,827	14.98%
Puerto Rico/ U.S. Virgin Is.	11,414	11,741	( 2.79%)	19,720	13,245	48.89%
Dakota Fellwshp	21,069	17,911	17.63%	47,400	40,584	16.79%
Iowa Fellowship	34,875	36,817	( 5.27%)	76,697	78,100	( 1.80%)
Montana Felwshp	41,574	32,236	28.97%	63,411	64,617	( 1.87%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>140,710,282</b>	<b>137,332,523</b>	<b>2.46%</b>	<b>124,879,325</b>	<b>120,192,358</b>	<b>3.90%</b>

NOTE: Amounts reported rounded to nearest dollar.

(Source of this information: Southern Baptist Executive Committee)

This Fax transmission from ABP