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**Messengers reinforce
CP, reject alternatives**

By Associated Baptist Press

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Messengers to most state convention meetings this fall reinforced the concept of the Southern Baptist Convention's giving plan, the Cooperative Program, and rejected alternatives.

Only one state — Virginia — approved a plan changing the unified giving method which Southern Baptists have been using since 1925.

In North Carolina, messengers overturned a similar proposal which would have changed the way churches in the state participate in the worldwide missions, evangelistic and educational work of the 14.9 million member SBC. However, the action allows churches to participate in an alternative funding plan similar to the one adopted in Virginia.

In most other states, messengers seemingly reinforced the unified giving plan concept by approving budgets which included increases in contributions to the national budget.

Other states took additional actions. Alabama, California, Indiana and Oklahoma passed strongly worded resolutions supporting the Cooperative Program as the means of funding missions. Florida Baptists declined to allow a supporter of alternative giving to serve as a trustee of one of the agencies.

The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, a Washington-based religious liberty watchdog organization, failed to win support from any of the conventions where efforts were made to include it in the budget. Only at the Virginia annual meeting did the BJC receive funding as a budget line item.

At the 1990 annual meeting of the SBC, the budget allocation from the SBC to the BJC was slashed from \$397,461 in 1989-90 to \$50,000 in 1990-91.

Efforts were made in Missouri, Tennessee, Kentucky, New England and Hawaii to provide funding for the BJC. All failed.

Since the 1990 annual meeting of the SBC, moderate-conservatives have discussed means to bypass the SBC Executive Committee and to fund national entities of the SBC which support their causes.

In two states, budgets were proposed which allowed alternative funding. In Virginia, the new funding plan won by a two-to-one margin; in North Carolina it lost by a slim, three-tenths of a percent margin.

The record number of Virginia messengers — 4,700 — approved a 1991 budget that radically changes the way the state association distributes its contributions to world missions.

The \$16.3 million budget is the same amount as the current budget. However, next year 64.5 percent will fund state ministries while 35.5 percent will be allocated to causes beyond Virginia.

The budget provides that the 35.5 percent to world missions causes — \$5,552,200 — will be divided two ways. Half of the amount — \$2,776,100 — is to be sent to the SBC for distribution in line with the convention's Cooperative Program adopted by the SBC in June.

The remainder will be designated to eight causes: Foreign Mission Board, \$1,611,950; Home Mission Board, \$620,000; Annuity Board, \$25,000; BJC, \$75,000; Baptist World Alliance, \$100,000; Associated Baptist Press, \$60,000; partnership missions projects, \$134,150; and a fund to assist Virginia students attending Southern Baptist seminaries, \$150,000.

Intense interest in the budget apparently contributed to the unprecedented registration figure which shattered last year's record attendance of 2,727. The unexpected crowd sent state association officials scrambling to print additional ballots and brought threats from the city fire marshall to close the doors to additional participants.

In North Carolina, passions also were intense over a budget which would have changed the distribution of funds in a method similar to the Virginia plan. A record number of 6,500 registered.

The proposed budget presented by the state convention's General Board changed the distribution but not the figures from the current budget. It proposed to divide receipts 65.83 percent for North Carolina causes and 35.17 percent to the SBC.

In the SBC portion, 20.3 percent would have been sent undesignated to the SBC while 14.87 percent would have been designated to SBC entities approved by North Carolina.

The proposed budget provided for churches to choose as an option that all of the 35.7 percent going outside the state would be sent undesignated to the SBC.

After the budget was presented C. Mark Corts, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Winston-Salem, a past president of the state convention, proposed a substitute that reversed the formula. Under his proposal, if churches make no choice on the use of their gifts beyond the state, all would be sent undesignated to the SBC.

Churches would have to choose to have their funds divided along the proposed percentages.

When messengers voted, the Corts amendment passed by 122 votes out of 6,004 cast.

In Florida, messengers participated in an unexpected dispute over cooperative missions funding.

Messengers refused to let an advocate of an alternative funding plan serve as a trustee of the Florida Baptist Theological College in Graceville, a convention-owned undergraduate school that receives almost \$1 million from the state Cooperative Program.

Although the state Committee on Nominations had recommended Patrick Anderson of Lakeland be re-elected to a second term as a FBTC trustee, messengers intervened. They first rejected the committee's entire report, then reconsidered, approving the other 75 nominees and asking the committee to submit another nomination for Anderson.

Anderson, a professor of criminology at Florida Southern College in Lakeland, was state coordinator for the moderate organization Baptists Committed to the Southern Baptist Convention this spring.

He also led a workshop at the August meeting of moderate-conservatives in Atlanta where an alternate funding plan — the Baptist Cooperative Missions Program, Inc. — was established.

The Florida committee later nominated Brandon pastor Robert Reccord for the FBTC post. Anderson's name was offered as a substitute from the floor but Reccord was elected 296-211.

Otherwise, Florida Baptists did not directly address the issue of cooperative missions funding, approving without debate a \$24 million state budget which designated 50.75 percent for state causes; 46 percent to the SBC; and 3.25 percent for ministerial annuities.

Three states passed strongly worded resolutions on the Cooperative Program.

Alabama Baptists said the CP is the "chief means through which the churches of Alabama ... shall support our mission endeavors"

Oklahoma Baptists encouraged all Baptists to reaffirm commitment to the Cooperative Program while discouraging "any deviant plan to the existing method of mission support."

Indiana Baptists warned that "negative designation could ultimately lead to the demise of our missions support program."

They resolved that as a convention "we ... hereby publicly declare our continued support and affirmation of the Cooperative Program." They also said they "express our profound disappointment in any attempt to decrease or withhold missions giving"

In regard to the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, New England and Hawaii rejected efforts to include funding for the organization.

In Missouri, an effort to include the BJC as a line item for \$15,000 failed 711 - 500.

In Kentucky, an effort was made to establish an endowment fund through deposit of \$25,000 from 1989-90 year-end funds, as well as a one-time allocation of \$17,358. The proposal failed 834 - 921.

In Tennessee, a proposal was made by the Executive Board to include the BJC in the 1991 budget for \$28,000. The proposal, however, was withdrawn in a meeting of the Executive Board on the eve of the state convention annual meeting, in what was called an effort to promote harmony and peace.

At the convention session, an effort was made to restore the allocation, but was defeated by a large margin.

New England Baptists rejected an effort to fund the BJC as a line item, and Hawaii Baptists referred a request for funding to its Executive Board.

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Governance of schools dominates two meetings

By Associated Baptist Press

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Governance of two of Baptists' oldest and largest educational institutions dominated the Texas and South Carolina Baptist conventions annual meetings in mid-November.

Major controversies erupted when Baylor University in Waco, Texas, and Furman University in Greenville, S.C., each unilaterally moved to make their boards of trust self-perpetuating.

Both institutions cited fear of a "fundamentalist takeover" as the reason for their actions.

In moving to create the self-perpetuating boards, the two institutions distanced themselves from the state conventions, which previously had named trustees for the institutions.

In addition to Baylor and Furman, questions of governance of schools also appeared in the annual meetings of the Florida, Louisiana and Oklahoma conventions.

The Baylor and Furman actions set off controversy in the state conventions, both leading to called meetings of the executive boards, hints of lawsuits and widely divided opinions. In Florida, Stetson University moved to distance itself from the Florida Baptist Convention through a negotiated arrangement which will reduce the level of funding by the FBC in exchange for less involvement in the selection of Stetson trustees.

In Louisiana, a proposed charter restatement for Louisiana College in Pineville was withdrawn from consideration after controversy erupted.

The charter revision, which has been under consideration by the college for two years, was aimed at streamlining the document. It reduces the present charter from 11 articles to six and is specific in maintaining its relationship with the convention and allowing the convention to name its trustees.

The revision was withdrawn and college officials pledged to dialogue with Louisiana Baptists during the next 12 months. Messengers voted to authorize the convention president to appoint a five-member committee to dialogue with the college and report back to the 1991 annual meeting.

In Oklahoma, messengers moved to keep a tighter grip on Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee, passing a resolution calling for "necessary steps to be taken to ensure commitment to the historic relationship" between the school and the state convention.

However, a move to change convention bylaws to strengthen pastoral representation on the OBU board was defeated.

At the annual meeting of the Baptist General Convention of Texas in Houston, a record 7,106 messengers registered, primarily drawn by what has become known as the "Baylor Question."

On September 21, Baylor trustees altered the university charter to remove the institution from control of a 48-member board elected by the convention and to place it in the hands of a 24-member self-perpetuating board of regents.

The charter change provides the BGCT shall continue to elect 48 trustees, but their duties will be limited to electing only one-fourth of the regents.

The BGCT Executive Board, in called session, named a 26-member committee to study the relationships between the school and the convention.

The committee met prior to the annual meeting, partly behind closed doors. It presented a recommendation which stipulated that Baylor trustees be elected according to the BGCT constitution and added the trustees "shall not assume the office of 'trustee' as defined in the amended Baylor charter unless and until they are directed to do so by formal action" of the convention and its Executive Board.

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In presenting the recommendation of the committee, Chair Robert Naylor harshly criticized the Baylor action.

His presentation was met by sharp rejoinders from Winfred Moore, trustee chair and Herbert Reynolds, Baylor president, and calls from some Baylor supporters that Naylor, President Emeritus of Southwestern Baptist Seminary, Ft. Worth, Texas remove himself from the study committee.

He declined to do so.

Baylor emerged again in the final day of the annual meeting as supporters made an effort to restore BGCT funds which have been escrowed.

A confusing series of votes followed. When it finally concluded, messengers denied by a 29 vote margin — 1,995 to 1,966 — a “request” that consideration be given to freeing Baylor funds now being held in escrow and to be escrowed in the 1991 budget.

The vote to continue to deny the funds came on the heels of another ballot taken on the same issue only minutes earlier that had passed 2,164 to 1,991.

The first vote was discarded and the new vote ordered after a convention official said there was an error in the printed version of the BGCT budget.

Since the error related to ministerial tuition scholarships, which he said erroneously had been included in the escrowed funds, a new vote was ordered.

One convention observer said the confused way the “Baylor Question” was handled probably left none of the messengers — supporters or opponents — satisfied and caused many of them to wonder if anyone, in fact, had won.

In South Carolina, the convention drew a record 5,084 registered messengers, but did not feature the same rancor as the Texas convention.

Furman trustees in early October took similar action to create a self-perpetuating board of trustees.

Messengers voted to escrow money budgeted for Furman, a recommendation which came from the convention’s General Board, which met on the day before the convention.

The action will hold the funds designated for Furman in an interest-bearing account for a year in order to permit dialogue between a committee to be named by the outgoing convention president and a committee to be named by Furman. Under the budget adopted at the annual meeting, Furman would have received \$1,828,000, about 3 percent of its operating budget, from the state convention.

After the general board recommendation was presented, Michael Hamlet, pastor of First Baptist Church of North Spartanburg, made a substitute motion calling for the convention to enter “friendly court action” against Furman.

Hamlet’s substitute was defeated and messengers overwhelmingly adopted the recommendation of the General Board.

In another matter relating to a convention-owned school, South Carolina messengers approved changing the name of the Baptist college at Charleston to Charleston Southern University.

A substitute motion to name the school the Baptist University at Charleston failed 1,411 to 1,512. Messengers then approved the new name 1,637 to 1,272.

In Florida, messengers overwhelmingly approved a plan — jointly offered by Stetson University in DeLand, and convention officials — that gradually eliminates Florida Baptist Convention funding of the school in exchange for granting Stetson more autonomy in the election of the trustees.

When the plan was presented, it was billed as both a way to take the “abrasion” out of the relationship and to free up more money for missions causes in the state.

Under the plan, Florida Baptists will give up their right to approve the nomination of the university’s 24 trustees, but will continue to participate in the nomination process for the 18 trustees who must be Baptists.

In exchange, the convention gradually will cut its financial support almost in half, from the 1990 level of \$950,000 to \$500,000 in 1995. The \$500,000 level will remain in place until 2000 when the convention’s obligation to the school will end.

The plan was approved overwhelmingly after messengers rejected a move to cut all convention funding immediately.

Under the plan, the money received by Stetson between 1996 and 2000 will be used to build a \$3 million endowment. Stetson will seek to raise another \$3 million, and, if achieved, the \$6 million will be used primarily for scholarships for Baptist students.

The new plan replaces a 1957 "working agreement" under which all 24 trustees were nominated by a committee composed of three current trustees and three convention representatives. The nominees were approved by the state convention and elected by the trustee board.

Under the new plan, the nominating committee will be expanded to seven by adding a fourth Stetson trustee. The committee will fill only 18 trustee posts and the nomination will be "reported" to the state convention but will not be subject to its approval.

Proponents of the Stetson plan said that in contrast to the controversies in Texas and South Carolina, the Florida action is a "model of love."

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**Samford receives
\$38.8 million bequest**

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BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (ABP) — A \$38.8 million bequest to Samford University by philanthropist Ralph Waldo Beeson is the largest gift in Alabama history and the largest bequest to a single educational institution in the nation since 1986.

Beeson, a retired Liberty National Life Insurance Co. executive, died Oct. 15 at the age of 89. He was described as "Samford's greatest benefactor because of his numerous gifts to the University over more than 20 years."

The bulk of his estate was divided between Samford and Ashbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky, which also received a \$38.8 million bequest.

Beeson's bequest to Samford provides the following:

- \$17 million for endowment and support of Samford's Beeson School of Divinity.
- \$8.5 million for scholarships in the School of Divinity and the Orlean Bullard Beeson School of Education at Samford, which is named for Beeson's late wife.
- \$7.3 million for endowed professorial chairs
- \$2 million for enrichment of School of Education programs
- \$2 million for the Samford Summer Institute of Teaching Excellence program for teachers in grades K-12.
- \$2 million for the Samford School of Nursing.

Beeson began supporting Samford scholarship and building programs during the 1960s. His gifts made possible a new university center and a building for the school of education during the 1970s. In the 1980s, he funded the first divinity school on the campus of Samford. The divinity school is named for Beeson and his father, John Wesley Beeson.

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**Eastern Europe and Russian
documentary set for ABC-TV**

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FORT WORTH, Tex. (ABP) — "Winds of Freedom," a Southern Baptist-produced television documentary about Christianity in Eastern Europe and Russia will be aired nationally over ABC-TV Sunday, Dec. 2. David Hartman, formerly of Good Morning America, hosts the program.

The program explores the role individual Christians and some churches played in moves toward democracy and its effect upon spreading the gospel. "Winds of Freedom" was videotaped

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on location in Russia, Romania, Hungary and East Berlin by the SBC Radio Television Commission production staff.

Some stations are expected to air the documentary at other times than the Dec. 2 date. The RTV advises viewers to check their local listings for times and dates.

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**Ohio black pastor
elected president**

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PARMA, Ohio (ABP) — Gary L. Frost, 36, a Youngstown pastor is the first black ever elected president of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio. Frost was elected first vice president of the convention in 1989. Rising Star Baptist Church, Frost's church, is in the top three churches in its association in Cooperative Program giving. The Rising Star church is believed to be the first black church in the SBC launched through a home missions church planter, who preceded Frost.

Frost is believed to be the second black elected president of a state Baptist convention in the SBC. Donald L. Sharp, pastor, Faith Tabernacle Baptist Church, Chicago, served as president of the Illinois state convention.

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**Gregory named
for Baptist Hour**

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FORT WORTH, Tex. (ABP) — Joel Gregory, 42, pastor of Travis Avenue Baptist Church, Fort Worth, has been named permanent speaker on the Baptist Hour, Southern Baptists' longest running radio program. The Baptist Hour will celebrate its 50th anniversary of broadcasting in January 1991.

Gregory has been pastor of the Fort. Worth church for five years. Previously he was preaching professor at Southwestern Seminary and president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

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