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Meredith College CP funds escrowed,
special committee to study action

By R.G. Puckett

CARAWAY, N.C.--(ABP) The Executive Committee of the General Board, Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, reviewed the actions of the trustees of Meredith College, adopted two recommendations from a special study committee and agreed to work toward "a peaceful and positive" solution to the situation.

Trustees of the women's college in Raleigh voted on February without prior approval of the state convention to amend Meredith's charter so that future trustees will be elected by the Board rather than the Convention. Also, any additional changes in the charter will be done without prior approval of the state convention.

A Meredith College/Baptist State Convention Relationship Committee was created and met Monday, March 4, prior to the Executive Committee meeting on March 5.

Both meetings were held at Caraway Conference and Retreat Center; David Hughes, president of the Council on Christian Higher Education and pastor of First Baptist Church, Elkin, chairs the special relationship study committee and General Board President E. Glen Holt, pastor of First Baptist Church, Fayetteville, chairs the Executive Committee.

Hughes reported to the Executive Committee, of which he is a member by virtue of his office in the Christian Higher Education Council, that the relationship committee had reviewed all documents pertinent to the situation and the events which led to the Meredith trustee decision on February 22.

After explaining that the relationship committee wanted to work toward a "peaceful and positive solution" to the action of the college trustees which violates the provisions of the state convention's constitution and the previous charter of Meredith College, he offered two recommendations which were adopted by the Executive Committee:

1. That the Cooperative Program funds allocated to Meredith College in the 1991 state convention budget after February 22 be held in escrow and placed in an interest-bearing account until such time as the situation is resolved.

2. That Robin Hinson of Charlotte be retained as attorney to give legal council to the relationship committee as it deals with the leadership of Meredith College in seeking to resolve the conflict between trustee action and the Baptist State Convention.

Members of the committee discussed the gravity of the action of Meredith trustees and its implication for all of the agencies and institutions of the convention.

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While there was no discussion of a possible lawsuit to force the Meredith trustees to rescind their action, the question was raised as to the "expectations" of retaining legal counsel.

The explanation offered pointed out that there are legal ramifications to the college trustee action as well as questions of Baptist polity. Also, there is a question of financial responsibility in carrying out the budget allocations mandated by constitutional provisions which names affiliated agencies/institutions.

The question that must be resolved is a definition of Meredith College's relationship to the convention. It was generally agreed that no Cooperative Program funds can be distributed to the college until that issue is settled. The question of whether designated funds would be withheld was not discussed but the basic policy of the state convention is to honor the intentions and wishes of any donor, whether church or individual, in the matter of designated funds.

The special committee on relationships will work in concert with the Council on Christian Higher Education and the Executive Committee. It will expect to bring some report to the General Board in the May meeting, although there was no expectation that the matter would be resolved that quickly.

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McGregor named executive director
of Associated Baptist Press

WASHINGTON (ABP)—Don McGregor, former editor of the Baptist Record with 40 years of experience in journalism, has been elected executive director of Associated Baptist Press.

ABP, an autonomous news service not structurally related to any Baptist entity, is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of 15 Southern Baptists from across the nation.

McGregor, who retired last year from the editorship of the Mississippi state Baptist paper, was the unanimous choice of the Board. Immediately before his service in Mississippi, McGregor was

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editor of community newspapers in Texas.

He joined the staff of the Texas Baptist Standard in 1952 and became associate editor in 1960. Following his work at the Standard, he was editor of the California Southern Baptist before returning to his native Texas to work at the community newspapers.

"We feel so fortunate to have a man of McGregor's experience and commitment to head up ABP," Charles Overby, chairman of the Board, said immediately following McGregor's election.

"He brings to the task all of the insight and ability gained from his long service in Baptist journalism," Overby added.

ABP was chartered in July 1990 and launched in September 1990. It has operated up to this point with a consulting firm and temporary reporters and writers.

Overby, president and chief executive officer of the Gannett Foundation with headquarters in Arlington, Va., and McGregor will immediately seek to employ an executive editor and editorial assistant on a full-time basis. Central operations for ABP will continue to be located in Nashville, Tenn., with a corps of correspondents distributed around the country.

The news service is available to Baptist publications, agencies and institutions as well as all secular media outlets. ABP is funded through subscription fees from media outlets receiving the news service, budget allocations from Baptist churches and organizations and contributions from individuals who are supportive of its mission to present objective news.