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IN THIS ISSUE:

- * Bush courts Religious Right at National Affairs Briefing
- * Coalition backs Bush candidacy, seeks Southern Baptist votes
- * Well-being of the Religious Right disputed by activists, observers
- * Fundamentalists share strategies for controlling state conventions
- * Evangelist announced as candidate for presidency of Texas Baptists
- * Texas group takes aim at alternative giving
- * Fellowship's July receipts continue pattern of growth

Bush courts Religious Right
at National Affairs Briefing

By Ken Camp

DALLAS (ABP) -- Surrounded on the rostrum of the National Affairs Briefing by prominent Southern Baptists, President George Bush renewed his call for a constitutional amendment for school prayer and accused Democrats of leaving God out of their party platform.

While homosexual-rights protesters confronted police outside the Dallas County Convention Center Aug. 22, inside Bush was greeted with chants of "four more years" by conservative Christians attending the briefing.

Fewer than 2,500 had paid the \$25 registration fee to attend earlier sessions of the Aug. 21-22 briefing, but up to 10,000 gathered for the no-cost Saturday night rally featuring Bush as keynote speaker.

The first National Affairs Briefing in 1980, generally credited with launching the Religious Right, drew 18,000 at its largest session, which featured presidential candidate Ronald Reagan.

Sharing the platform with Bush were Joel Gregory and W. A. Criswell, pastor and senior pastor, respectively, of Dallas' First Baptist Church; Jerry Falwell, founder of the now-defunct Moral Majority; Richard Land, executive director-treasurer of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, and Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church near Memphis, Tenn.

The Democratic Party "left out three simple letters: G-O-D" from their party platform, Bush said, adding the Republican platform "is different. We are proud to celebrate our country's Judeo-Christian heritage, unrivaled in the world."

Citing an "erosion of the traditional moral and religious order," Bush stressed the importance of faith and family values. He called for a voucher system granting "parental choice" in education, stressed his opposition to abortion, and urged passage of a school-prayer amendment.

"Something is wrong when kids can get birth control in school but can't say a prayer in school," he said.

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Democratic presidential candidate Gov. Bill Clinton of Arkansas and his running mate, Sen. Al Gore of Tennessee, declined invitations to address the briefing, said organizer Ed McAteer, president of the Religious Roundtable and a member of Rogers' church in Memphis.

In introducing Bush, McAteer's pastor praised Bush's commitment to "foundational principles that transcend politics" and that are "much stronger than any denominational label."

Rogers particularly praised Bush standing in support of "the right of all free-born Americans to pray vocally in their own house, the church house, the state house and the school house."

During an earlier address, Rogers -- a three-time president of the Southern Baptist Convention -- blasted the "sheer dishonest rhetoric" of politicians who say they are pro-choice, not pro-abortion. He said, "We are a nation of bloody hands, lying lips and perverse justice."

Land, likewise, focused on sanctity of human life issues, saying, "We are sacrificing our children before the idols of convenience, material well-being and social acceptance."

The biblical definition of family is under sustained attack, he said, pointing to the growing acceptance of homosexuality as an acceptable alternative lifestyle.

"We have a commandment from God to love homosexuals, but we have a responsibility under God to hate homosexuality," he said.

Land urged conservative Christians to be politically active on an issues basis: "Don't vote your geographic location. Don't vote your denominational affiliation. Don't vote your pocketbook. Vote your values. Vote your convictions."

The key issue for the 1990s and the beginning of the 21st century is saving families, Falwell told the briefing.

"We must reverse everything the feminists, the abortionists, the sexual revolution and the 'me generation' have corrupted," Falwell said. "We either do it or we lose our country."

Patrick Buchanan, who was defeated in the Republican Party presidential primaries, used the National Affairs Briefing platform to expand the same theme of cultural, religious war that he mentioned during his address to the Republican National Convention in Houston.

"There is a religious war going on for the soul of America," he said. The war will be won, he said, only with basic truths taught explicitly in the Bible and implicitly in the great cultural works of Western civilization.

Modern society in the United States reveals "a new barbarism on the march" that was seen most clearly in the eyes of the mobs who burned and looted South Central Los Angeles earlier this year, he said.

"What we saw in Los Angeles was evil exultant and triumphant," said Buchanan, a senior advisor to presidents Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford and Ronald Reagan.

"Where did the mobs come from? They came out of public schools where God has been expelled, prayer has been banned and the Ten Commandments have been rejected."

At a press conference prior to the National Affairs Briefing, People for the American Way criticized the family-values platform of the Bush-Quayle campaign. The civil-liberties organization issued a statement terming family values "a code phrase...masking an active agenda of intolerance and hate aimed at minorities, working women with children, and gays."

Michael Hudson, general counsel with PAW, said the rhetoric of religious war and family values allows politicians to "play the race card," introducing subtle, racially coded messages into the campaign through "us vs. them" language.

Howard Phillips, chairman of the Conservative Caucus, said conservative Christian activists must "tear down the temples of Baal in Washington and reconstruct a godly republic." Phillips, the presidential candidate of the U.S. Taxpayers Alliance, urged pro-life forces to demand a ban on all abortions and accept no compromise.

"It is time for the Right to Life movement to say, 'no exceptions,'" said Phillips, who served two key posts in the Nixon administration.

Oliver North, president of the Freedom Alliance but best known for his role in the Iran-Contra arms-for-hostages scandal, told the briefing participants they need to "throw the rascals out" of Congress and elect legislators who represent traditional Judeo-Christian values.

Though the National Affairs Briefing was billed officially as a non-partisan educational event, numerous speakers used the platform to applaud the "pro-family" planks in the Republican Party platform and to slam Democratic presidential candidate Clinton.

At the presidential level, "radical feminists have the Democratic Party in a death grip, and there's no way they can get out of it," said Phyllis Schlafly, founding chairman of the Republican National Coalition for Life. Conservative Christians must continue to seize power within the Republican Party at every level in order to preserve and advance the pro-family agenda, she said.

Donald Wildmon, president of the American Family Association, blasted Clinton's "new covenant" pledge, claiming that the Democratic candidate has made a covenant with homosexuals, pro-abortionists, pornographers and the liberal media.

"Bill Clinton has sold his soul to the most liberal elements in this country," said Wildmon, a United Methodist minister from Tupelo, Miss.

William Murray, the born-again son of atheist Madalyn Murray O'Hair, said he did not know how Clinton could "claim to be a Southern Baptist" but be against public school prayer and for abortion rights.

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Coalition backs Bush candidacy,
seeks Southern Baptist voters

By Ken Camp

DALLAS (ABP) -- Some evangelical Christians have formed an organization to back the presidential candidacy of George Bush and counter the impact of the all-Baptist Democratic ticket of Bill Clinton and Al Gore.

The group -- "Evangelical Leaders and Laymen for Bush/Quayle '92" -- was formed at the request of "the Bush people," Ed McAteer, a Republican activist and member of Bellevue Baptist Church near Memphis, Tenn., told Associated Baptist Press Aug. 22.

The effort will target evangelical voters, particularly Southern Baptists, say its organizers.

Evangelicals could provide the swing vote in the presidential election, and Southern Baptists make up the largest segment of that potential voting bloc, explained Herb Ellingwood of Sacramento, Calif., a co-chair of the evangelical coalition.

Ellingwood, an international lawyer, said to expect several past presidents of the Southern Baptist Convention to endorse the Republican presidential ticket.

Republicans and their evangelical supporters are determined to minimize

the impact of an all-Baptist Democratic presidential ticket, according to sources at the Aug. 21-22 National Affairs Briefing in Dallas.

Southern Baptists were prominent at the briefing, which was a showcase for the Republican-evangelical alliance and featured a keynote speech by Bush.

Bush shared the rostrum with Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis; Richard Land, executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission; and Joel Gregory and W. A. Criswell, pastor and senior pastor, respectively, of First Baptist Church of Dallas.

Also on the stage was Jerry Falwell, founder of the now disbanded Moral Majority and a co-chair of the evangelical coalition for Bush/Quayle.

Rogers, a three-time president of the Southern Baptist Convention, introduced Bush as a man committed to principles "much stronger than any denominational label."

Land told the mostly Southern, conservative evangelicals at the briefing: "Don't vote your geographic location. Don't vote your denominational affiliation.... Vote your values."

The evangelical coalition, chaired by Gov. John Ashcroft of Missouri and his wife, Janet, lists among its leaders at least two prominent Southern Baptists -- Paige Patterson, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C., and Jess Moody, pastor of Shepherd of the Hills Baptist Church, Van Nuys, Calif.

Falwell told ABP he has talked with about 200 Southern Baptist pastors since the Democratic convention, and none plans to vote for fellow Southern Baptists Clinton and Gore.

"The fact that those two old boys are Southern Baptists will have absolutely no impact on the evangelical vote," said Falwell, pastor of Thomas Road Baptist Church, an Independent Fundamentalist congregation in Lynchburg, Va.

"I don't see any way that any evangelical who takes his faith seriously could swallow the Democratic platform," Falwell said.

Clinton and Gore, both of whom are members of Southern Baptist churches, declined invitations to speak at the "non-partisan, educational" briefing, said McAteer, the meeting's organizer and president of the Religious Roundtable.

The denominational affiliation of Clinton and Gore will not sway politically conservative voters, predicted Ellingwood. In fact, he said, many Southern Baptist leaders will be anxious to "disassociate themselves" from the Arkansas governor. "Governor Clinton's lifestyle doesn't match what Southern Baptists believe," he said.

On the morning following Bush's appearance at the briefing, he and First Lady Barbara Bush attended worship services at First Baptist of Dallas. They were publicly recognized by Criswell, but Bush did not speak at the church service.

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Well-being of the Religious Right
disputed by activists, observers

By Ken Camp

DALLAS (ABP) -- Spokesmen for the conservative Religious Roundtable and the liberal People for the American Way agree on one point: Twelve years after its birth, the Religious Right is alive and well.

But a noted church-state scholar argues that while the Religious Right is not dead, it certainly is in poor health.

In 1980, the National Affairs Briefing, sponsored by the Religious Roundtable, brought 18,000 conservative religionists from at least 40 states to Dallas' Reunion Arena to hear more than 50 speakers.

That meeting is best remembered for two unscripted remarks:

-- Bailey Smith, then president of the Southern Baptist Convention, said as a brief aside in a sermon, "God Almighty does not hear the prayers of a Jew."

-- And presidential candidate Ronald Reagan, departing from his prepared text, told the crowd, "I know you can't endorse me, but I endorse you."

Smith's remark drew widespread attention after a transcript of his address was distributed by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith. But it was Reagan's endorsement of the Religious Right that had lasting impact.

"That was the beginning of the love affair" between the Religious Right and the most conservative wing of the Republican Party, according to Jerry Falwell, founder of the now-defunct Moral Majority.

"I believe the strength of evangelicals politically is at least 10 times greater today than it was then," said Ed McAteer, president of the Religious Roundtable and national chairman of both the 1980 and 1992 National Public Affairs Briefings in Dallas.

But James Wood Jr., director of the J. M. Dawson Institute of Church-State Studies at Baylor University, disputes that assessment.

"The New Religious Right definitely has peaked," said Wood. "Its best days are in the past."

Declining viewership of once-powerful televangelists and the erosion of their financial bases are obvious measures pointing to a decline in the movement's strength, according to Wood. All empirical evidence by researchers points to a serious drop in support for the Religious Right, he said.

"People are beginning to realize that the issues they touted in such simplistic terms are much more complex than they originally imagined them to be," said Wood.

For example, he notes polls indicating the American public does not share the Religious Right's desire for the complete outlawing of abortions.

"That's not where the American people are," Wood said. "People have come to recognize that the whole problem of involuntary pregnancies is much more complicated than the solutions offered by the New Religious Right."

"The Religious Right has fallen on hard times," he summarized.

Attendance at the National Affairs Briefing in Dallas Aug. 21-22 would seem to support Wood's assessment. In contrast to the 1980 meeting of 18,000, the most recent briefing attracted fewer than 10,000 to its largest session featuring keynote speaker President George Bush.

Falwell insists, however, that the politically conservative evangelical movement is simply more decentralized today than in the early 1980s.

"There will never be another Moral Majority. There will never be that kind of centralized organization again. It isn't needed today," Falwell said.

"We're better off now that the issues are clear and we know one another. Now people are willing to pick up the phone and call when an issue comes up. Used to, we wouldn't even talk to each other."

High-profile evangelical leaders also are far more willing to publicly endorse "pro-family" candidates today than they were 12 years ago, said McAteer, a member of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn.

His pastor, three-time Southern Baptist Convention president Adrian Rogers, introduced Bush at the 1992 National Affairs Briefing. Rogers had declined to introduce Bush to the 1988 National Religious Broadcasters convention, according to McAteer.

"Evangelical leaders, almost without exception, are totally committed to George Bush," said McAteer, who announced the formation of a pro-Bush coalition -- Evangelical Leaders and Laymen for Bush/Quayle '92 -- at the conclusion of the National Affairs Briefing.

The Religious Right is "alive, well and very influential," according to Michael Hudson, general counsel with People for the American Way. As evidence, Hudson pointed to the "family values" planks adopted in the Republican Party platform.

Although the Moral Majority has disbanded, its mantle has fallen on a number of other organizations, including Donald Wildmon's American Family Association, Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum, and Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition.

The Religious Right is "stronger than ever," according to Phil Swantek, Dallas County coordinator for the Christian Coalition.

Swantek noted that 300 Christian Coalition members were voting delegates at the Republican National Convention in Houston. The coalition currently boasts about 500 county chapters nationwide.

Involvement by the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, the ethics agency of the nation's largest Protestant denomination, in the Religious Right has "given legitimacy to the movement that it did not have before," according to PAW's Hudson.

Richard Land, CLC executive director, is "a very effective advocate" for the Religious Right's positions, Hudson said.

Land disagreed with that characterization. The CLC is not a "Religious Right organization" but is organized by the Southern Baptist Convention to "work for the preservation of Judeo-Christian values," he said.

The CLC speaks to a broader range of issues than those usually included in the Religious Right's agenda, he explained, pointing specifically to commission statements on racism and environmental stewardship.

"There is no dichotomy between the Religious Right and the Christian Life Commission," he added. "It's just a matter of apples and oranges. We serve a different function."

Land was featured on the program of the National Affairs Briefing the same night as Falwell and Bush, and the CLC maintained a booth at the two-day meeting. And the CLC's Washington-based director of government relations, Jim Smith, was on the staff of the Republican Study Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives before joining the CLC in 1989.

Land dismissed as "ridiculous" charges that the CLC is too closely tied to the Republican Party, noting both the CLC's criticism of White House actions regarding homosexual groups and its support of Democratic-sponsored legislation on sports gambling, warning labels on alcoholic beverages and other measures.

"Christians have a responsibility to be involved in the political process, and both parties need more help than we can give them," he said.

The CLC wants to involve Christians in the political process "on an issues basis," said Land.

Though Land served as a senior advisor to former Texas Gov. William Clements, a Republican, he brushed aside suggestions that he is personally identified with the GOP.

"As head of the Christian Life Commission, I am particularly careful about my political involvement," Land said, noting that he attended neither the Democratic nor the Republican conventions. "I simply cannot take part in partisan politics."

However, Land had harsh words for the Democratic Party platform planks regarding the rights of homosexuals. "As far as Southern Baptists are concerned, homosexuality is not a question of right and left. It is a

question of right and wrong."

Many speakers at the National Affairs Briefing drew sharp contrasts between the homosexual-rights and abortion-rights planks in the Democratic platform and the pro-life, "family values" planks in the GOP platform.

Phyllis Schlafly, president of the Eagle Forum, particularly stressed the Religious Right carries clout in the Republican Party today that was undreamed of in 1980.

Baylor's Wood acknowledged the impact of Religious Right activists in drafting the Republican Party platform, but he predicted those planks will prove to be a detriment to the party because they are not commonly shared by the voting public.

"The Republican Party will find the abortion issue a millstone around its neck," he said. "It will find that its position on aid to parochial schools is a minus, not a plus. I believe they seriously have misjudged the electorate."

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Fundamentalists share strategies
for controlling state conventions

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (ABP) -- Baptist leaders from about 15 states met in Memphis, Tenn., Aug. 20 to learn how to extend fundamental-conservative control to the state convention level.

Fundamental-conservatives, who have held sway in the national Southern Baptist Convention since 1979, want to repeat that success in the 40 Baptist state and regional conventions. Several state conventions already are under control of the fundamental-conservative movement.

The Memphis meeting was hosted at Bellevue Baptist Church by pastor Adrian Rogers, three-time president of the Southern Baptist Convention. Rogers delivered an address to participants, who reportedly numbered about 50.

The meeting was organized by two state-level fundamental-conservative strategists -- Perry Ellis of Dallas, executive director of the Texas Baptist Conservative Fellowship, and T. C. Pinckney, a fundamental-conservative organizer from Alexandria, Va.

All the "major state conventions" were represented, said Pinckney, a retired Air Force brigadier general and member of the SBC Executive Committee. He described the meeting as a strategy-sharing session, "an exchange of lessons learned."

"In the actual meetings, there was never discussion of how we should go about making changes in, say, Oklahoma or Alabama," Pinckney explained. "It was more of: 'What has worked for conservatives in Virginia, what has not worked for conservatives in Virginia.'"

Pinckney described Rogers' address as inspirational. "It was inspiring to me; it probably wouldn't have been inspiring to many moderates."

Among the how-to strategies shared by the state leaders were: electing sympathetic state convention officers, influencing denominational appointments on the national and state levels, picking and instructing convention messengers from local churches, and influencing Baptist business on the associational level.

Pinckney declined to predict what effect the Memphis session will have on the fall meetings of the Baptist state conventions. "The results will vary considerably from state to state," he said.

Fundamental-conservatives already are active on several fronts in Texas.

However, Ellis did not respond to a request from ABP to discuss the Memphis meeting.

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-- By Robert Dilday and Greg Warner

Evangelist announced as candidate
for presidency of Texas Baptists

By Toby Druin

DALLAS (ABP) -- Hispanic evangelist Rudy Hernandez will be nominated for president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, giving Texas Baptists another indication that the pace of denominational politics in their state will intensify in the coming months.

Dallas pastor Jack Graham announced he will nominate the San Antonio evangelist for BGCT president at the 1992 annual convention in Corpus Christi Nov. 9-10.

In 1989 Hernandez served as second vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention as the nominee of the SBC's fundamental-conservative faction.

Hernandez is expected to challenge Bryan pastor Dick Maples, who was elected BGCT president last November and is eligible for a second term. Maples has not yet indicated if he will be nominated again.

Graham said the decision to nominate Hernandez was his own, but he said he discussed it with others, including backers of a new effort to persuade Texas Baptists to abandon alternate-funding plans. As part of its effort, the group called on Texas Baptists to elect new leaders.

Graham said it is likely Hernandez also will have the support of the Texas Baptist Conservative Fellowship, a new organization of fundamental-conservatives in the state. Graham noted, however, Hernandez's nomination "doesn't come out of" the Conservative Fellowship, which Graham helped organize.

"The nomination comes out of concern about all Texas Baptists being on board in support of the Cooperative Program and our cooperative effort in missions, our desire to maintain our strong relationship with our institutions and our desire to help churches grow in terms of evangelism and missions," said Graham, pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church in Dallas and immediate past president of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference.

"We need someone who can bring us together and someone who can basically get us back on track as Texas Baptists in terms of evangelism, missions and church growth," added Graham, "and I feel Rudy Hernandez is the best one to do that job."

Hernandez said he had agreed to permit his nomination in the interest of bringing peace and unity in the Texas Baptist family that he said has been marked by "erosion of support, membership, fellowship and cohesiveness."

The 62-year-old evangelist, who has been preaching since he was 13, has been pastor of churches in San Antonio, Corpus Christi, Menard and Eden. He has been an evangelist since 1986. He currently is a trustee of the SBC Home Mission Board.

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Texas group takes aim
at alternative giving

By Toby Druin

FORT WORTH, Texas (ABP) -- Texas Baptists, who were deeply divided last year over who would control the country's largest Baptist college, this year may find themselves squaring off on a new battleground -- the Cooperative Program.

A statement of support for the Cooperative Program, signed by more than 150 Texas Baptists, has been sent to all Baptist pastors in the state.

The statement questions the practice of channeling church contributions to alternative organizations such as the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and urges the pastors to bring messengers to the state convention in November to elect new convention leaders committed to the Cooperative Program, Southern Baptists' traditional plan of unified funding.

The statement "reflects no organized nor politicized group in particular," said Phil Simmons, pastor of North Richland Hills Church in Fort Worth, and one of the framers of the statement. But, Simmons said, the group will support the candidacy of San Antonio evangelist Rudy Hernandez, who also is expected to receive the endorsement of the state's new conservative coalition in his bid for the convention presidency.

"This is not a moderate or a conservative issue," Simmons said. "It is a Cooperative Program issue."

The "Common Statement of Convention Support" is signed by 153 persons, most of whom are Texas pastors. It recognizes the Cooperative Program as the "historical, traditional and foundational method in the Southern Baptist Convention for support of missions and evangelism."

It contends the Cooperative Program has been eroded by formation of different groups such as the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, the organization formed in protest to recent developments in the SBC and which has been receiving an increasing amount of church contributions for its own programs.

Since January, the CBF has received \$3.8 million -- a \$1.5 million increase over the same period last year -- and the group is on target to reach its year-end projection of \$6.6 million.

The national Cooperative Program, meanwhile, is slightly behind the pace of a year ago and in danger of missing its \$141 million goal for the year. The Cooperative Program also funds denominational efforts on the state level; giving to the Texas CP is lagging 2 percent behind 1991 but is still slightly better than in recent years.

The Texas group's statement urges Baptists in the state to maintain the traditional process of funding the BGCT's Cooperative Program budget and the traditional relationships with the BGCT's institutions.

A letter accompanying the statement and signed by four Dallas-Fort Worth area pastors noted: "Increasingly widespread concern has been noted, through general conversations, that BGCT budget items have been or will be directed outside the traditional channels. Any such additions or deletions serve to further move the BGCT away from the process which has made her great."

The letter urged pastors who agreed to "make plans now to bring a contingent of like-minded messengers to the BGCT in Corpus Christi in November."

After a bitter debate last year, Texas Baptists voted in their November convention to give BGCT-affiliated Baylor University more autonomy in selection of its trustees. The Baylor dispute produced political strategies on both sides, with fundamental-conservative leaders opposing the charter change.

Simmons said the Cooperative Program statement and letter came out of discussions early this year over the growing strength of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, concern that the BGCT needs leaders who are solidly supportive of the Cooperative Program rather than alternative designation, and dissatisfaction with the agenda of the Texas Baptist Conservative Fellowship, an organization of fundamental-conservatives formed in January.

In response to the statement, two BGCT officials noted no state convention funds are budgeted for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Neither is there any plan to provide budget funds for the organization, said Executive Director William Pinson Jr. and Treasurer Roger Hall.

A change that went into effect last January, however, allows churches to withhold their contributions from as many as five items in the Cooperative Program budget and still have their gifts counted as Cooperative Program contributions. Prior to the change, any gift with restrictions was counted as a designated gift.

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Fellowship's July receipts
continue pattern of growth

ATLANTA (ABP) -- Contributions to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in July topped the half-million-dollar mark for the fourth month in a row and the fifth time this year.

The \$512,226 received by the Fellowship in July was 55 percent more than during the same month in 1991. So far this year, contributions to the Fellowship have increased 68 percent over the same seven-month period in 1991.

That pace places the organization on target to surpass its 1992 projection of \$6.6 million in contributions. Last year the Fellowship took in \$4.5 million.

Cecil Sherman, coordinator of the Fellowship, said the July receipts were "a good bit better than anyone expected." While previous monthly totals benefitted from income produced by the Fellowship's May general assembly and other events, he said, "We had no special gifts to swell July. It was just strong."

"More important," Sherman wrote in a letter to the group's Coordinating Council, "we are able to use more and more of the money people send us." He noted that churches and individuals who contribute to the Fellowship are asking that an ever-larger portion of the gifts be used to support the Fellowship's own ministries.

In the past, as much as three fourths of the money contributed through the Fellowship was designated for traditional Southern Baptist causes, such as the agencies of the Southern Baptist Convention. That portion has dropped to about half in recent months as more churches and individuals earmark their contributions for Fellowship-supported causes.

In July 50.8 percent of Fellowship contributions were passed on to SBC causes, down from 54 percent in June. Meanwhile, 32.7 percent was targeted for the Fellowship's own efforts, such as the organization's newly launched missions program.

An additional 7.6 percent of June receipts went to organizations and agencies supported by the Fellowship and 8.8 percent was designated for state-level Baptist causes.

Sherman also noted 653 churches have contributed to the Fellowship this year, including 30 that contributed for the first time in July. The largest

group comes from North Carolina (104), with almost as many from Texas (98). Other states with more than 20 churches participating are Georgia (72), Virginia (62), South Carolina (48), Kentucky (46), Missouri (42), Florida (38), Tennessee (34) and Alabama (21).

The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship was established last year by Southern Baptist moderate-conservatives displeased with the current leadership of the Southern Baptist Convention and its agencies.

The Fellowship's three funding plans allow churches and individuals to bypass traditional Southern Baptist funding channels, such as the Cooperative Program, and to withhold funds from SBC agencies of which they disapprove.

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-- By Greg Warner

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CORRECTION: In the Aug. 20 ABP story "FMB trustees take little action...", the name Thibodeaux was misspelled in the 26th, 28th, 30th and 31st paragraphs.

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