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Southwesterners say "wait and see" if Hemphill can build bridges, trust

By Ken Camp

FORT WORTH, Texas (ABP) -- Picking up the pieces is the priority this fall at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, which is still rocking from the most turbulent event in the school's 86-year history -- the March firing of President Russell Dilday.

Building bridges, trust and a climate for spiritual renewal on campus are among the top agenda items for Kenneth Hemphill, who was elected in July to succeed Dilday as president of Southwestern, considered the largest seminary in the world.

But while many students, faculty and seminary supporters seem to be embracing his initiatives enthusiastically, others are adopting a more cautious "wait and see" posture, and some are anxious to "bail out."

Hemphill, a former Norfolk, Va., pastor and most recently director of the Southern Baptist Center for Church Growth, was elected unanimously by seminary trustees July 28, marking a major victory for conservatives who now dominate the Southern Baptist Convention.

Four months earlier, by a 27-7 vote, trustees of the Fort Worth, Texas, school fired Dilday, charging he failed to bring Southwestern in line with the "conservative resurgence" in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Total enrollment at Southwestern this semester is 3,254, a decrease of about 6 percent from the 1993 enrollment of 3,458. The decline comes after a three percent rise in enrollment last fall. The 204-student drop in enrollment breaks down to 156 fewer new students and 48 fewer returning students.

Hemphill, however, points to a "fairly predictable and steady decline" in seminary enrollment over most of the last 10 years. He termed a drop of only 6 percent "a small miracle" in light of Dilday's dismissal and events that followed.

Dilday's firing, the first outright dismissal of an agency's chief executive in the 15-year SBC controversy, unleashed a firestorm of protests, drawing rebukes from students, faculty, alumni, donors and at least one accrediting

agency.

"Over the summer, there were predictions of a 10-to-30 percent loss in enrollment," Hemphill said. "We are very thrilled and appreciative to the Lord for the students he has entrusted to us." Within five years, Hemphill said he hopes to see enrollment figures topping 5,000.

Increased enrollment would translate into more money for the seminary, both from student matriculation fees and -- more significantly -- from SBC's Cooperative Program funds. Funding to the six Southern Baptist seminaries through the SBC's unified budget is based in part on enrollment, expressed in full-time equivalent hours.

The money appears crucial.

The seminary reportedly is \$600,000 behind in its contingency budget set up last spring. The bulk of that deficit is due to the loss in enrollment, according to a seminary source. Another \$180,000 loss is attributable to lost revenue from the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, which in June was prevented by the SBC from funding the seminary.

In addition to working on expanding enrollment, Hemphill also plans to pursue endowment dollars aggressively. At a Sept. 12 general faculty meeting, he said one fourth of the seminary's budget by the year 2000 will come from endowment earnings.

To expand that income base, he announced his intentions for Southwestern to endow three new chairs in its School of Theology:

-- A Rebekah A. Naylor Chair of Practical Missions honoring the longtime Southern Baptist medical missionary to India and daughter of former seminary president Robert Naylor.

-- A James T. Draper Jr. Chair of Pastoral Ministries named for the current president of the Baptist Sunday School Board who served as chairman of the Southwestern Seminary trustees when he was pastor of First Baptist Church in nearby Euless; and

-- A W. A. Criswell Chair of Expository Preaching honoring the senior pastor of First Baptist Church, Dallas, on the occasion of his 50th anniversary at the church.

Hemphill told ABP that the Criswell chair recognizes the "Truett connection" shared by Dallas' First Baptist Church and Southwestern Seminary. George W. Truett was pastor of the church for 47 years and a founding trustee at the seminary. Hemphill acknowledged that the historic connection had been strained in recent years.

"We want to build as many bridges as possible," he said. "This is an appropriate time to build that bridge."

The new chairs would please SBC conservatives, since both Criswell and Draper are prominent figures in the conservative movement.

Trustees still are being polled about the proposed endowed chairs, so any announcement regarding them is tentative at best, Hemphill emphasized.

Critics of Dilday's firing predicted it would have disastrous impact on the seminary's ability to raise money. Several members of the Southwestern Council, a group of leading benefactors, resigned after the firing. One estimate in March was that the action could cost the seminary as much as \$15 million in lost gifts and pledges.

According to Dilday, Hemphill's great challenge among personnel at Southwestern is to build trust. But there is considerable anxiety and uncertainty about the new administration, said Dilday, now a homiletics professor at rival Truett Seminary, 90 miles south at Baylor University.

"They want Dr. Hemphill to succeed, but they have a 'wait and see' attitude," Dilday said. "As much as they and I respect Ken Hemphill, the same board is in place."

William Tolar, vice president for academic affairs and provost at Southwestern Seminary, said most faculty and staff seem to be "coming with an open, wait-and-see attitude" toward the new president.

Seminary students should not be seeing many drastic changes in their classes, he said, pointing out that only four teachers had left since Dilday's dismissal -- one retiring, one dropping back to adjunct teacher status, one leaving to accept a church pastorate and one accepting an endowed chair at another institution.

There is a "pretty good overall spirit" on campus, Tolar concluded.

But some other faculty members, who asked not to be named for fear of reprisal, spoke of apprehension and uncertainty.

"There is as low a morale among the faculty as I have ever seen," one professor said, noting that he and several others are at varying stages in seeking other employment.

"With the scrambling to get out of here as quickly as possible, it's not hard to imagine that 10-to-15 of the 40 School of Theology faculty members could be gone by the end of this semester, another dozen or so by next summer," another faculty member speculated.

To date, there have been no major administrative realignments. But John Earl Seelig -- brought in by the seminary trustees immediately after Dilday's firing to handle public relations -- has been named assistant to the president for special projects and will coordinate Hemphill's inauguration next March.

One public relations move that has generated considerable discussion concerned making "The Scroll" -- the seminary's two-page newsletter for students which had long been published on the front and back covers of the Baptist Standard -- into a four-page, free-standing publication. Copies of the weekly Texas Baptist newspaper no longer are made available to students.

Discontinuing the Baptist Standard and printing "The Scroll" separately was termed by Seelig to be an "economic measure." He also said the expanded format provides more space for announcements and that "the logistics" of producing the newsletter on campus are easier than having the newsletter printed in Dallas.

But some on campus consider the move an attempt to control the flow of information to students and retaliation for the Standard's news coverage of Dilday's firing.

Hemphill, who said he did not know about the change until he received a note from Standard editor Presnall Wood, acknowledged that the Standard's reporting of events at Southwestern could have been a factor.

The Standard may have been discontinued, at least in part, out of fear that its reporting would "cause unrest on the campus," he said. The move might be reconsidered, he added.

Some seminary personnel also have complained that stories from Associated Baptist Press, an alternative independent news service, are no longer readily available on campus. ABP likewise was criticized by trustees for its coverage of the firing.

Some faculty complain about Hemphill's leadership style. One professor compared Hemphill's administrative approach to "the big church pastor, pulling strings and not consulting with anybody." Others say the new president is simply naive.

One item that Hemphill views as bridge building but that troubles some faculty is a mid-October weekend prayer retreat to develop faculty/trustee relations, a project funded by a Lilly Foundation grant.

Each trustee has been given a profile card on three faculty members with instructions to begin praying for them. At the meeting in October, the "prayer partners" will meet for an extended time of prayer together.

Hemphill reportedly told the faculty he is not requiring -- but is expecting -- their attendance and participation at the retreat. He encouraged them to cancel other engagements that weekend if at all possible, a prospect one professor deemed unlikely.

An earlier retreat -- this one in August for faculty and administrators -- drew a mixed response. Hemphill reported the retreat was successful and uplifting. One of the professors requesting anonymity called it "nauseating," particularly the way Hemphill and Tolar glossed over the pain of Dilday's firing.

Among Hemphill's objectives is to reclaim the seminary's reputation for evangelistic fervor. Citing concern that some perceive Southwestern has "lost its fire for evangelism and missions," Hemphill reportedly told faculty his remedy: they would be required to sign a card pledging to witness to "60 souls in 60 days" beginning Jan. 1, 1995. Cards were distributed and collected at the faculty meeting.

One of Hemphill's consuming passions is a hunger for revival and spiritual renewal, beginning on Seminary Hill. The fall's first week of seminary chapel services featured a prayer emphasis, followed the next week by the seminary's annual fall revival. In a letter to alumni, Hemphill asked them to lead their churches in a prayer campaign

for the seminary's spiritual health.

Chris Keathly, president of the Theological Fellowship, a student organization, agreed that the prayer emphasis created an "excitement" on campus and an expectancy for revival.

Keathly, a fourth-year master of divinity student, said there is a "hunger for a lot of healing" on campus in the wake of Dilday's dismissal, and he believes Hemphill can have a genuine "ministry of healing."

Sharon Kirkpatrick, also a fourth-year master of divinity student, said she hopes so, but she is not so sure. "I feel a greater sense of loss than I do a sense of community on campus," she said.

Students who went through the turbulent time of Dilday's firing last March have "a special bond," but their grief is not shared by new students, Kirkpatrick said.

"Praying for spiritual renewal is not something that started all of a sudden two weeks ago," she said. "I hope this is not something that is trying to be forced in order to hurry people through the grief process. I don't know if it is. I hope it's not."

Kirkpatrick, who is scheduled to graduate in December, said she probably will go somewhere other than Southwestern to complete her doctoral studies in theology and Christian ethics -- a move she likely would not have made before the events of last spring.

Fourth-year divinity student Kevin Griffith likewise is looking at other institutions to do his advanced studies. "I don't feel comfortable with the climate here to do doctoral work," Griffith said.

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Theological education for Baptists diversifying as new year begins

(ABP) -- Transition in Southern Baptist Convention seminaries, now firmly under conservative control, and growth in alternative schools started by moderates greeted ministerial students as they began a new academic year this fall.

Among news from Baptist seminaries:

-- Baylor University's new George W. Truett Theological Seminary opened with 50 students and six faculty members. The seminary, established by vote of Baylor trustees in 1993, holds classes at First Baptist Church in Waco, Texas.

At an Aug. 28 convocation, Truett dean Robert Sloan urged students to avoid "fuzzy-minded emotionalism" and to preach God's word with integrity.

Sloan said he is not fond of the "moderate" label associated with the school because it is a passive term. "I am not passive about my commitment to Christ."

"We have a mission as large as the Great Commission, as peculiar as the gospel of Jesus Christ and as relevant as the diverse world in which we live," Sloan said.

Members of the inaugural class hold degrees from 26 institutions. Nineteen are Baylor graduates.

-- Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, the first of the moderate alternative theological schools, began its fourth year with a record new-student enrollment of 47. A preliminary count placed total enrollment at 135.

The seminary also added its ninth faculty member, Daniel Bagby, former pastor of Seventh and James Baptist Church in Waco, Texas, who joined the faculty as professor of pastoral care.

During the summer, the school expanded into a second building. Ashcraft Hall, named for Morris Ashcraft, first acting president of the seminary, now houses administrative offices, a student lounge and the Baptist Center for Women. Both Ashcraft Hall and Paisley Hall next door, the seminary's first building, are leased from the Presbyterian

School of Christian Education.

Penrose St. Amant, former dean of Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., delivered a convocation address Sept. 13, urging students to combine rigorous study with spiritual discipline.

"There are many avenues to knowledge, and the most important one is quietness," St. Amant said. "I would say the greatest weakness in theological education is at the point of spiritual formation. I'm glad to know that this seminary is doing something about it."

Last year the seminary graduated its first 10 students, earning associate membership in the Association of Theological Schools in the U.S. and Canada. This year's graduating class is expected to exceed 30.

-- Resignations of popular faculty members -- prompted by disagreements with conservative trustees now running the institutions -- marked the beginning of the school year at two of the SBC's six seminaries.

Students arrived to the campus of Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., just as news broke that theology professor Molly Marshall resigned, effective Dec. 31, rather than face heresy charges. Both faculty and student groups protested.

Dixie Petrey, president of the seminary's Student Government Association, said Marshall's resignation affects returning students more than new students, most of whom are unfamiliar with Marshall and the circumstances surrounding her resignation.

At Midwestern Seminary, Vernon Davis, faculty dean and vice president for academic affairs, announced he is leaving the Kansas City, Mo., seminary to lead a new master of divinity program at Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas.

Davis said with changes anticipated after the July 1996 retirement of President Milton Ferguson, he could no longer find "personal fulfillment" teaching at Midwestern.

-- At Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., the first of the SBC seminaries to come under conservative control, administrators announced revisions in the master of divinity degree program, the basic program of study for prospective pastors.

The new program requires all students to study the biblical languages of Greek and Hebrew and to acquire hands-on experience in preaching and personal evangelism. It adds courses in missions, evangelism and Christian philosophy to the core curriculum and increases the number of credit hours required for the degree from 88 to 94.

The changes, said Dean Russ Bush, are intended to provide what "pastors and other ministers will really need to be effective in the 21st century."

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-- By Bob Allen

Faith plays role in debate of public policy, panelists say

By Pam Parry

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- People of faith should engage in public-policy debates but stop short of claiming to have the only moral solution to America's problems, according to participants on a Sept. 14 panel sponsored by the Interfaith Alliance.

The Washington-based alliance is a coalition that was founded to combat religious extremism.

Barry Lynn, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, said religious persons should participate in the political arena as long as they don't abuse religion and politics in the process. Lynn said he takes exception to Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition defining itself as having "the only Christian position" in the

community.

Robertson ultimately wants to make America "a theocratic state, rather than a democratic one," Lynn said, adding that would make "us look more like Iran."

Knighton Stanley, senior minister of Peoples Congregational United Church of Christ in Washington, said anytime people state a position as "the only one" they are demonstrating the "epitome of arrogance."

Rep. Jim Leach, R-Iowa, said he did not always agree with the religious right or Christian Coalition but cautioned against accusing them of attempting to establish a theocracy. The religious right, Leach said, is correct when it says that lack of moral values is one of America's greatest problems.

Lynn said he carefully chose the word "theocracy." Making America a Christian nation is Robertson's goal, Lynn said. "This is a religious war for the Republican Party and the soul of America," Lynn added.

Leach said he did not agree with the religious right on several issues but he has never heard one of their leaders espouse that a religious figure ought to rule the state -- his definition of theocracy.

Religious people have every right to reflect whatever perspective they want to on the political process, Leach said, noting that many people on the religious right believe their views have been left out of American society and are now demanding attention.

To some degree that should be celebrated, Leach added.

Stanley cautioned that sometimes discussions about the religious right are too general. The religious right is not bigoted in all instances, he said.

Ann Lewis, president of Politics Inc., said politics should be value-based and respect the individual conscience of each citizen. The problem with the Christian Coalition, she said, is that it uses a religious name and symbols to advance a political agenda.

The American people have a good idea how to balance faith and public policy, Lewis said. They don't want to see politics leave their morals behind, and at the same time, they don't want to see religion used inappropriately to advance politics, she said.

Leon Hooper, a senior research fellow at Woodstock Theological Center of Georgetown University, said the real danger of the religious right is that it polarizes the public discourse -- it reduces America to a confrontational society in which only power dominates.

Citing a recent Newsweek poll finding that 76 percent of Americans believe the nation is in moral and spiritual decline, panel moderator Barbara Reynolds asked if it was time to admit America had made a mistake and should let state-sponsored prayer back in public schools?

Lynn, an ordained minister, said state-sponsored prayer in public school is one of Robertson's aims. He said that teaching values in public school is not the issue, but whether or not those values would have to be "prooftexted with the Christian Bible."

Prayer in public schools would be a big mistake, Lewis said, because it would fail to take seriously the First Amendment and would not begin to address the real issues confronting America's schools.

Instituting prayer would be a quick, easy fix that would not begin to get at the heart of the problem, she said.

Stanley agreed, citing the rights of religious minorities. Sixty seconds of religious language -- much of which is increasingly intolerant and hateful -- will not solve the problems facing America's children, he said.

"I do not need a political system to help me be religious," Lynn said, adding that his family prays together and he does not want some other institution instilling different religious values in his children.

By Marv Knox

MOREHEAD, Ky. (ABP) -- The Bible is neither inerrant nor infallible, but that doesn't negate its religious value, a former Baptist university professor proposes in the latest edition of Southwest Philosophy Review.

On the contrary, inerrancy is a defensible claim for the Bible and should be promoted carefully but with confidence, counters a leading conservative theologian.

Jack Weir, professor of philosophy at Morehead State University in Morehead, Ky., and a member of First Baptist Church there, wrote the first draft of his recently published paper in 1984-85 while he was a tenured faculty member at Hardin-Simmons University, a Texas Baptist school in Abilene. The paper drew the ire of the university's trustees, and Weir was temporarily relieved of some duties. He eventually left Hardin-Simmons, where he taught from 1977 to 1993, but only recently published the paper.

In it Weir says biblical inerrancy and infallibility were the dominant doctrines used by the Southern Baptist Convention's fundamental-conservative faction to displace moderate-conservatives as leaders of denominational seminaries and other agencies. Conservatives contended many denominational workers did not believe the Bible, he adds, while moderates -- rather than debating inerrancy -- countered by claiming the real issue was not theology, but politics.

Weir, a graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, says "the main fear" driving the fundamental-conservative movement is true: most professors reject biblical inerrancy and infallibility and seek to "educate" their students into the moderate position.

"For the sake of the autonomy of all persons involved, moderates should openly acknowledge and defend the rationality of their beliefs," he says.

Weir takes up that challenge. The focus of his paper is on two words: "inerrancy" and "infallibility."

He defines inerrancy as the claim that the "original autographs" of biblical documents -- the copies penned by their respective authors -- "contained absolutely no mistakes, no matter how minor and on all subjects, including science, history, politics, psychology and so on."

Critiquing inerrancy, Weir says: "Research has shown that many biblical documents never had in any meaningful sense one original author; hence, the terms 'autograph' and 'original' have no referent. ... For many biblical books, an original document never existed."

Rather, the books were compilations of sources, he adds. "Many biblical books -- including the gospels -- began as more or less flexible oral traditions and not as written documents. Once in written form, the documents went through long periods of editing, when materials were added, deleted and changed to suit the wishes of the editors. Since the documents were not regarded as sacred until decades -- and sometimes centuries -- after they were started, they were often freely and copiously edited."

So, the possibility of finding a single, complete, original copy of a biblical book is nil, and could not be proven even if found, he says.

According to Weir, some inerrantists stress "that the biblical documents were inerrant at the time they were made canonical," that is, when they were determined to be part of the Bible as people know it. But he asks, "Since more than one version of some books existed at the time that the books became canonical, ... which version is the inerrant one?"

Turning to "infallibility," Weir notes the term "is the claim that the handwritten copies of these original autographs -- and copies of the copies, for centuries until today -- are 'not prone' to mislead or cause error. That is, except for insignificant and minor errors, such as errors in factual detail and grammar, the copies reproduce the truth of the originals."

The validity of infallibility can be checked, Weir contends. "If the Bible as it exists today is prone to cause error, the infallibility claim has been refuted," he explains. "If it contains an error and someone believes it based on biblical authority, then the Bible obviously is 'prone' to cause such an error in belief."

Weir cites 13 concepts, and the biblical texts from which they are drawn, as evidence of error in Scripture. They include the subordination of women to men (1 Corinthians 11:1-16; 14:33-36; Ephesians 5:22-24); ethnic cleansing, annihilating whole populations, and killing civilians and infants in times of war (Exodus 23:23-33; 34:11-16; Numbers 33:51-56; Deuteronomy 7:1-6; 20:16-18; Joshua; Judges; Psalm 137); the Apostle Paul's belief that Christ's Second Coming would come in his own and his readers' lifetime (1 Thessalonians; 2 Thessalonians; 1 Corinthians); outer space being filled with water (Genesis 1; Psalm 104); and the acceptability of slavery (Deuteronomy 20:10-15; Philemon).

"These errors are clearly taught, mandated or assumed by the biblical texts" in both the Old and New Testaments, he says.

Critical examinations of inerrancy and infallibility are not new, Weir claims.

"Scholars and laity have been discussing most of them for centuries," he notes. "I have said little that Southern Baptist fundamentalists -- Bible professors, theologians, pastors and seminary professors -- do not know. ...

"Most inerrantists and infallibilists themselves, in their own preaching, theology, writing and practice, do not actually hold to the objective, complete and literal inerrancy and infallibility of all of the Bible on all subjects at all times. They usually adopt (interpretive) schemes whereby certain troublesome parts of the Bible can be dismissed to lesser authority.

"Yet these inerrantists and infallibilists still insist that all believers at least confess that the Bible is inerrant and infallible. What they actually seem to want is a high level of religious respect and reverence for the Bible but not actual belief in inerrancy and infallibility."

Their passion is driven by a concern for verifying religious knowledge, Weir asserts.

"The inerrantists and infallibilists believe that, if the Bible were not inerrant and infallible, then the believer would have no certain way of gaining knowledge," he says. "It would be impossible for the believer to determine what parts of the Bible inerrantly and infallibly come from God and what parts of the Bible mistakenly come from human initiative and error."

But that view, Weir said, distorts the nature of truth and overly restricts God's ability to confirm truth to Christians.

On the other hand, a more helpful view accepts the idea that the Bible can contain errors and still be a sacred and valuable religious document, Weir writes.

Rather than insist the Bible must be perfect because God is perfect and would not inspire an imperfect message, Weir stresses: "The power and perfection of God somehow is compatible with an errant and fallible Bible. ... The perfect God has been revealed through the words and experiences of finite, free and sinful humans."

David Dockery, theology dean at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, defends the use of the term inerrancy but admits it is often misunderstood. "To confess that the Bible is inerrant affirms that it is the written word of God," said Dockery, who was asked to respond to Weir's paper.

While inerrantists emphasize propositional revelation, Dockery agrees that attention should be given to the Bible's literary diversity. "Because the Bible is a divine-human book, the interpretive tools of literary and historical criticism can be employed with care and faith-oriented presuppositions," he said.

"We can define inerrancy as the idea that when all the facts are known, the Bible, properly interpreted in light of the culture and the means of communication that had developed by the time of its composition, is completely true in all that it affirms, to the degree of precision intended by the author's purpose, in all matters relating to God and his creation," Dockery said.

"Such an affirmation of Scripture, which now characterizes the new leadership in the SBC, places most Southern Baptists squarely in the evangelical world. Such a confession gladly affirms the Bible as God's truthful, written and authoritative word. Thus, it can and should be trusted in all matters."

Texas board hears report on missions giving study

By Ken Camp

DALLAS (ABP) -- The Baptist General Convention of Texas' executive board heard a report but took no action on a proposal to alter the way cooperative missions are counted in Texas. Meeting Sept. 13 in Dallas, the 213-member board also adopted a recommended budget of \$63.5 million and rejected an effort to reduce funding to Baylor University.

The budget, which includes \$22.5 million -- 35.5 percent of the total -- for the Southern Baptist Convention through the Cooperative Program method of unified budget support, will be considered for approval by messengers to the annual BGCT meeting, Oct. 31-Nov. 1 in Amarillo.

The board, which conducts business of the BGCT between annual convention sessions, overwhelmingly rejected an amendment to the budget proposal by John Brunson of Houston that would have reduced funding to Baylor University in Waco by \$3.1 million.

The board also heard a summary of the report and recommendations of the Cooperative Missions Giving Study Committee by chairman Cecil Ray of Georgetown and a minority report from the committee by John Hatch of Lake Jackson.

Under the committee's recommendations, the state convention would recognize and distribute as Texas Cooperative Program contributions from churches given in any of three ways:

-- Gifts to the adopted budget of the BGCT and the adopted budget of the SBC according to the annually adopted percentage allocations between the two;

-- Gifts to the adopted BGCT budget only; or

-- Gifts to the adopted BGCT budget and other worldwide Baptist causes as directed by the individual church.

Traditionally, only gifts divided between the state convention and SBC have been labeled "cooperative" gifts.

Under the committee's recommended approach, the BGCT would continue its current practice of allowing churches to delete up to five line items from the BGCT and SBC budget and still have their contributions count as Cooperative Program.

"I have come to recognize that what counts for Baptists is cooperation," Ray said. "We can adjust the program, we can improve the program, we can alter the program and never lose cooperation."

Ray, a longtime proponent of the Cooperative Program as former director of the BGCT Stewardship Division and secretary-treasurer of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, said the recommendations are not what he would have approved 15 years ago, but reflect "where we are today, offering breathing room in the Baptist family."

In a minority report presented on behalf of five of the study committee's 22 members, Hatch recommended that only gifts to the BGCT and/or the SBC be recognized as Cooperative Program contributions.

The committee's recommendations represent "a radical change in both the structure and understanding of the Cooperative Program that would effectively destroy the Cooperative Program as we have known it," Hatch said.

Although board members raised questions about the proposal, no action was taken. Since the Cooperative Missions Giving Study Committee was authorized by the state convention, board approval of the recommendations was not required. The committee's report and recommendations will be considered by messengers at the state convention.