

# Associated Baptist Press

Editor: Greg Warner  
Associate Editor: Bob Allen  
Phone: (904) 262-6626  
Fax: (904) 262-7745

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## IN THIS ISSUE:

- SBC Cooperative Program report inflated by accounting change
- Killer of abortion doctor found guilty of murder
- Gregory's book-signing tour sparks outburst from Hawkins
- Texas Baptists approve plan redefining Cooperative Program (revised)
- Texas conservatives vow to organize opposition
- Annuity Board trustees change investment policy, as requested
- ABP directors' resolution, adopted Oct. 28, 1994 (full text)

## **SBC Cooperative Program report inflated by accounting change**

By Bob Allen

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (ABP) -- Almost a fourth of the reported \$6.3 million increase in the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program unified budget in 1993-94 are dollars that would not have been counted as Cooperative Program last year, Associated Baptist Press has learned.

During the 1993-94 year, which ended Sept. 30, the Cooperative Program received \$142,866,783, increasing about 4.6 percent over the \$136,539,730 received a year earlier and catching up, after three straight years of decline, to the record \$140,710,282 received in 1989-90, according to Executive Committee reports.

But those numbers include more than \$1.2 million in restricted funds from Baptist state conventions and another \$201,000 sent directly to the SBC for the unified budget. Before a change in the Executive Committee's accounting practices adopted last year, those funds would have been reported as "designated" gifts and not included in Cooperative Program totals.

And while 1993-94 totals exceed the 1989-90 record by \$2.1 million, the denomination lost ground in spending power. To buy what \$140 million would purchase in 1990, the SBC would have needed to take in more than \$159 million in 1994 dollars, based on annual percentage estimates of increased costs of living.

The Cooperative Program is the SBC's unified budgeting method that allows churches to write one check to fund both the national denomination and their respective Baptist state conventions. State conventions determine what percentage of the Cooperative Program will remain in their states to fund local ministries and what percentage is forwarded to the SBC. The states also may determine what types of gifts they will count as Cooperative Program, including, in some cases, those funding national non-SBC entities and others that are received by the SBC but because of different accounting procedures are not counted as Cooperative Program receipts.

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL  
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Last year the SBC Executive Committee revised its accounting policy for gifts carrying restrictions such as so-called "negative designations," which are given to fund Southern Baptist programs with the stipulation that one or more SBC agencies not receive a portion of the funds.

Formerly, such restricted funds were counted as "designated" gifts, while only undesignated gifts disbursed according to percentages in the SBC's unified budget were counted as Cooperative Program.

Recently, however, some Baptist state conventions -- particularly those with a more moderate bent than the conservative-dominated SBC -- have allowed churches a limited number of negative designations while counting their gifts as Cooperative Program.

The Executive Committee, in votes taken in February and June 1993 at the suggestion of an independent auditor, changed its accounting procedures. Effective Oct. 1, 1993, the start of the 1993-94 fiscal year, the Executive Committee regarded as Cooperative Program any funds to SBC entities that are identified by a state convention as Cooperative Program gifts.

Jack Wilkerson, the Executive Committee's vice president for business and finance, said last year's Cooperative Program total included \$1,237,657 sent by state conventions either designating or excluding certain SBC agencies. Those dollars were counted as "cooperative-designated," he said, "an internal term" that is not broken out of Cooperative Program figures in official reports. A new category of "Cooperative-SBC Causes," for gifts sent directly to the SBC's unified budget without passing through a state convention, received \$201,076.

Together, those items -- which formerly would have been counted as designated gifts -- amounted to about 22.7 percent of the \$6,327,053 increase in Cooperative Program receipts.

Designated gifts also grew slightly in 1993-94, 0.6 percent to \$127,828,517, but most of those receipts came through the convention's two annual missions offerings, the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions, which took in \$81.7 million -- up \$2 million from the year before -- and the Annie Armstrong Offering taken at Easter for home missions, which received \$36.8 million, up \$91,000.

A third category of designated gifts, meanwhile, lumped together as "other designations," declined \$2.1 million, to \$9.2 million.

The impact of the accounting change is apparently reflected in state conventions that allow churches to exclude certain SBC items in their definition of Cooperative Program.

In Texas, where churches may make up to five negative designations in their CP gifts, Executive Committee figures showed gifts to the Cooperative Program up \$2.1 million (11 percent) in 1993-94, and "other designations" down \$1.3 million.

In North Carolina, where an optional budget includes some SBC entities but excludes others, Cooperative Program was reported up \$532,000 (7 percent), while designations other than the missions offerings dropped \$205,000. In Virginia, which has a similar system, CP was up \$112,000, while other designations were down \$70,000.

Wilkerson minimized the effect of the accounting change. The overall CP figures "clearly show that the hearts of Southern Baptists are continuing to rally around the idea we can do together what we cannot do apart from one another," he said.

"I think we live in a world of change, but when you look at the bottom lines, it's real dollars. It's not creative accounting," he said.

Wilkerson pointed out that 30 of the 40 state and regional conventions, associations and Fellowships that give to the SBC showed increases in Cooperative Program and that many also had increases in designated gifts. "I go to the bottom line," Wilkerson said. "There's more money in the pipeline."

## **Killer of abortion doctor found guilty of murder**

PENSACOLA, Fla. (ABP) -- A jury recommended the electric chair for former Presbyterian minister Paul Hill, who was found guilty Nov. 2 of two murders outside a Pensacola, Fla., abortion clinic last summer.

The jury deliberated just 20 minutes Nov. 2 before finding Hill guilty. They deliberated longer the next day before recommending the death penalty. Circuit Judge Frank Bell is not bound by the recommendation and can impose a life prison sentence.

Hill, 40, was convicted of first-degree murder for the July 29 shotgun slayings of John Britton, a 69-year-old physician who performed abortions at the Pensacola Ladies Center, and James Barrett, 74, a volunteer escort at the clinic.

Hill, who acted as his own lawyer, chose to present no defense after a judge ruled he could not argue the shootings were justifiable homicides because they prevented the doctor from taking innocent lives by performing abortions.

Michael Hirsch, the attorney who wrote a paper laying out the legal authority for the justifiable homicide defense, called the trial a "travesty." "When the jury is kept away from a valid legal argument, justice cannot be done," Hirsch said.

The prosecutor in the case, Assistant States Attorney James Murray, said Hill "placed himself above the law" by carrying out his desire to "execute" providers of abortion, which he considered to be murderers.

Barrett's wife, June, who was wounded in the left arm in the shooting, related accompanying Britton to the clinic after picking him up at an airport and seeing the defendant place "an object" to the doctor's face and fire twice. After the shots, she said, there was silence.

"I looked through the seats and I saw this drip, drip of blood," she said, breaking into tears. "I whispered, 'Doc, are you OK?' No answer."

The jury of six men and six women were considering at press time Nov. 3 whether to recommend the death penalty or life in prison for Hill. Hill already faces life in prison for a prior federal conviction in the same shooting.

-30-

-- By Bob Allen

## **Gregory's book-signing tour sparks outburst from Hawkins**

By Greg Warner

AMARILLO, Texas (ABP) -- It used to be Joel Gregory's powerful sermons that stirred a crowd of Texas Baptists. But during their recent annual convention, the mere presence of the once famous pastor caused a stir -- and prompted an angry outburst from his successor, O. S. Hawkins.

Gregory, a former president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, attended the annual meeting, held in the Panhandle town of Amarillo, to promote his tell-all book about First Baptist Church of Dallas, the 28,000-member congregation he served as pastor for 23 months.

In his controversial book, Gregory says he resigned abruptly two years ago because legendary Senior Pastor W. A. Criswell reneged on a promise to surrender leadership of the congregation. Now in its second printing, the book paints an unflattering picture of the 84-year-old Criswell but says little negative about Hawkins.

Nonetheless Hawkins took Gregory to task in a sermon at the Texas Baptist Pastors' Conference Oct. 30 by referring to Gregory's recent divorce and remarriage. Speaking at a ceremony honoring Criswell's 50 years as pastor of the Dallas church, Hawkins decried the high divorce rate in America, which he said both he and fellow pastor and friend Jack Graham of Dallas have observed up close.

"Both his predecessor and my predecessor will go home tonight to the wife of another man," Hawkins said.

Graham is pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church, which made headlines in 1989 when then-pastor Billy Weber resigned amid charges of having extramarital affairs with church members. Weber reportedly has since divorced and remarried.

Gregory likewise was accused of having an affair by members of First Baptist -- charges he vehemently denies.

Gregory, who was in town but did not hear the sermon, was upset by Hawkins' comment. "I want O.S. to stop that," he told Associated Baptist Press. "There comes a time when, on behalf of my wife, I am going to have to respond."

"Frankly, if he doesn't shut up, I am going to sue on behalf of my wife," he said.

Later, in a meeting of Texas conservatives, Hawkins publicly confronted the Amarillo pastor who arranged for Gregory to hold a book signing at the public library.

"It was a scene," said Dee Slocum, pastor of Highland Baptist Church, who said he was accosted by the irate Hawkins. According to Slocum and other witnesses, Hawkins berated Slocum for promoting a book he said insults himself, Criswell and First Baptist.

Slocum said Hawkins' outburst was uncalled for and a poor witness. "I think it's unfortunate that a person held in such high expectation like O. S. Hawkins would twist plumb off and blow a gasket," he said.

The confrontation ended abruptly, the Amarillo pastor said. Slocum later offered his hand in apology to Hawkins, which the Dallas pastor accepted. "I said, 'I meant no disrespect for you, Dr. Criswell or your church, and if by sponsoring this signing we have offended you, we certainly apologize,'" Slocum recalled. "To his credit, he (Hawkins) said, 'Forgiveness granted.'"

Slocum said Gregory needed a local sponsor to use the public library, and Slocum was willing to do that for his long-time friend.

"It's just unfortunate that a scene was made," Slocum said. "I extend the benefit of a doubt to O.S. Maybe he was having a bad hair day. ... Obviously he is under a lot of stress about the book."

Hawkins did not respond to a request to discuss the episode.

But Hawkins was not the only one who reacted negatively to Gregory's presence in Amarillo. Youth from Slocum's church were "treated rudely" for passing out flyers at the convention announcing the book signing at the library across the street, he said.

"One of my volunteer youth workers said, 'If this is how Baptists act when they get together, I'm greatly disappointed.' I can't defend that."

Slocum said he was not trying to take sides in the dispute between Gregory and Criswell, but merely trying to be a friend to Gregory. "Like many people, I am torn between the respect and love for two people," he said. "In Christian grace and Christian mercy, I would not disown Joel, any more than it would pass through my mind to disown Dr. Criswell."

About 250 people attended the library signing. Gregory also signed copies of the book -- "Too Great a Temptation: The Seductive Power of the Superchurch" -- in an unofficial appearance at the Baptist Book Store in the convention center. He plans to attend several other state conventions in the coming weeks.

Gregory said the response from most Texas Baptists to his presence in Amarillo was "the friendly kind, almost tearful."

He said his book, rather than harming Hawkins, will help him by forcing the Dallas church to pay "vigilant attention" to the issue of Criswell's reluctance to leave. "The feeling things are settled there is off the mark," he said.

"I don't think there is anyone who will benefit more from the book than O. S. Hawkins," he told ABP.

Gregory said his experience at First Baptist, which placed him in the inner circle of Southern Baptist conservatives, changed his mind about the movement that brought conservatives to power. "I have to, in all candor, say ... it is at least as much political as theological."

"I see the inside of political fundamentalism in a new way," said Gregory, whose endorsement of the conservative cause in 1990 helped seal the victory over SBC moderates.

Because Gregory agreed with the cause, he said, he assumed conservative leaders were properly motivated. "I really granted the leadership of that movement the credibility of their convictions."

But while the inerrancy movement may have begun in earnest, he said, "By the time I got involved in it (in 1985), it had become something else."

Gregory lamented what he called the "first blood" philosophy that dominates conservative politics -- that only those who have fought alongside conservatives from the beginning can be trusted with positions of leadership. "If you were not in this from 1979, you were suspect," he said.

The fact conservatives have had trouble getting hard-core adherents elected to lead SBC agencies is "a hair-pulling frustration" for them, Gregory said.

Gregory said the "first blood" prejudice was demonstrated most clearly when a committee he chaired recommended Jerry Rankin as president of the Foreign Mission Board in 1993. Because Rankin, a career missionary based in Singapore, had been uninvolved in denominational politics, he was opposed by party conservatives because he was "not one of us," Gregory said.

Gregory said Rankin's opponents, though acknowledging his qualifications and deep spirituality, used allegations of Rankin's charismatic leanings to mount a campaign against his election. Rankin is not a charismatic, Gregory said -- "We were not about to put a practicing charismatic in that position" -- but his opponents used the charge "as a red herring" to scare up opposition.

The campaign failed and Rankin was elected, but Gregory was much the wiser, he said.

-30-

## **Texas Baptists approve plan redefining Cooperative Program**

By Greg Warner

AMARILLO, Texas (ABP) -- Texas Baptists voted Oct. 31 to broaden the definition of their primary funding mechanism, the Cooperative Program, to include church contributions to the moderate Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and other alternative organizations.

Messengers to the annual Baptist General Convention of Texas, meeting in Amarillo Oct. 31-Nov. 1, easily approved the recommendations of a special study committee, thereby enacting the convention's most radical change in the 69-year history of the Cooperative Program.

Some messengers predicted the change will "send shock waves" through the Southern Baptist Convention, which currently is divided over Cooperative Program issues. The Texas vote runs counter to the action taken by the conservative-dominated SBC, which ruled in June that its agencies cannot accept funds from the Fellowship.

About 200 Texas conservatives upset by the change met and agreed to incorporate an alternative organization, but there was little talk of a formal split from the Texas convention.

Messengers to the convention, who numbered 6,079 at the time of the long-awaited vote, turned back a minority report that would have rejected the committee's recommendation and an amendment that would have weakened it.

The report from the Cooperative Missions Giving Study Committee changes the way the state convention counts contributions it receives from the state's 5,500 Baptist congregations -- which totaled \$60 million in 1993.

Texas Baptist ministries receive 64.5 percent of that money, while 35.5 percent -- \$22 million in 1993, more than any other state -- goes to the national Cooperative Program to support Southern Baptist ministries worldwide.

Beginning Jan. 1, contributions will be counted as Cooperative Program in Texas if:

-- They support the BGCT and the SBC budgets in the traditional manner;

-- They support only the BGCT budget; or

-- They support the BGCT budget and other "worldwide Baptist causes," including the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, SBC agencies and Baptist World Alliance.

Previously only contributions that supported both Texas Baptist and SBC causes were recognized as Cooperative Program. However, Texas Baptists already allowed churches to exclude up to five SBC causes and still be counted as Cooperative Program contributors.

The Cooperative Program has been a battleground between conservatives, who now control the Southern Baptist Convention's \$140 million Cooperative Program budget, and moderates, who say they have been shut out of participation at most levels of the SBC. Moderates still control several key Baptist state conventions, including Texas, Virginia and North Carolina, and all three of those conventions have altered the traditional Cooperative Program budget.

In Virginia, disgruntled conservatives also have formed an alternative fellowship like the one launched in Texas.

Texas conservatives, meeting hours after the BGCT decision, voted to seek incorporation for the Texas Baptist Conservative Fellowship.

O. S. Hawkins, pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas, promised a "drastic" change in the way his church funds the BGCT -- one that will send more money to the national level. Speaking to the conservative gathering, he criticized the way the Cooperative Program change was handled by state leaders. "I'm not going to say much because I'm new to this state, but I recognize a train when it comes rolling down the track," he said. "What this is is an attempt to legitimize the CBF."

Former Texan Richard Land, now executive director of the SBC Christian Life Commission, attended the conservative meeting and told reporters, "This is a sad day for the BGCT."

Miles Seaborn, pastor of Birchman Baptist Church in Fort Worth, who presided at the meeting, said money will be sought to incorporate the group and to publish a newsletter.

But Jerold McBride, who was re-elected president of the Texas convention Oct. 31, said he is not worried conservatives will break away from the state convention. Few churches would agree to withdraw from the BGCT, even if their pastors are for it, he said. "Most people are not comfortable with that."

Conservatives won't be shunned but will be allowed full participation in Texas Baptist life, McBride promised. "Minorities have rights too."

The new Cooperative Program plan sends a message that Texas Baptists favor "states' rights over federal control," said McBride, pastor of First Baptist Church of San Angelo. It does not mean Texans are distancing themselves from the SBC, he added, "But we're saying it's our decision how we will give our funds."

McBride said the "catalyst" for the new plan in Texas was the March firing of Russell Dilday, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, by conservative seminary trustees. "Texas said, 'Enough is enough.'"

Messengers saluted Dilday and his ministry during a special presentation Oct. 31. The next morning he addressed about 1,400 people at a breakfast sponsored by the moderate organization Texas Baptists Committed.

Dilday, who argued in favor of the Cooperative Program change during debate a day earlier, told the breakfast crowd the change demonstrates Baptists want to bring the focus of denominational power closer to home. "Those kinds of regional expressions may be the pattern that leads us forward in Baptist life," he said.

He urged the moderate audience to be gracious in victory. "Never fall into the trap of un-Christian behavior we reject in others," he said. "When the vote goes your way, don't you gloat. Don't you lose the spirit of Jesus."

Morris Chapman, president of the SBC Executive Committee, which controls the national Cooperative Program budget, expressed "regret" at the Texas convention's action, which he said "unilaterally redefined its participation in the Cooperative Program" but added he believes "Texas Baptists will continue strong support of SBC missions and ministries."

Chapman, a former Texas pastor, predicted Southern Baptist churches in the state will be "inundated with fund-raising efforts" because of the action. He said he was surprised to hear debate framed in terms of states' rights vs. federal control. "The fact is that the Cooperative Program has always been a method of voluntary participation by the churches," he said, aimed at "greater efforts of spreading the gospel to an unsaved world."

When the Texas proposal was presented to messengers, study committee chairman Cecil Ray of Georgetown said it "provides the breathing room that is essential to keeping Baptists working together at the highest level of cooperation in this time of conflict."

In answer to frequent criticism, Ray said the plan does not end Texas' cooperative relationship with the Southern Baptist Convention and does not create new partnerships with other Baptist groups.

Ray, who previously wrote a book in support of the Cooperative Program and led a campaign to enlarge it, said, "Texas Baptists will shape and reshape the system or risk diminishing their effectiveness."

But John Hatch of Lake Jackson, a dissenting member of Ray's committee, said the plan "effectively destroys the Cooperative Program as we have known it."

Hatch, presenting a minority report on behalf of four other committee members, told messengers the plan would reduce mission contributions from churches and drive "a wedge between those who strongly support the Southern Baptist Convention and those who don't."

John Bisagno, pastor of First Baptist Church of Houston, said the plan "begins the erosion of the unity of Texas Baptists." "Many of us are being asked, against our conscience, to designate as Cooperative Program funds money that clearly is not," he argued. "It is not right. It is not truth."

The minority report was defeated on a show-of-hands vote estimated between 2-1 and 3-2 by observers.

An amendment then was offered from the floor that would have labeled the gifts to non-SBC causes as "Cooperative Missions Giving," not Cooperative Program. Both SBC and non-SBC gifts "would be labeled cooperative," said Michael Dean, pastor of Travis Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth, who offered the amendment. "There would be no second-class citizenship."

But Russell Dilday, former president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and a member of Dean's church, argued against the amendment, which he said "has a danger of institutionalizing a divided approach."

The amendment was defeated by an even wider margin than the minority report. The vote was then taken on the entire committee report, which passed easily, again by a 2-1 or 3-2 margin.

In a press conference after the vote, BGCT Treasurer Roger Hall said other state conventions are dealing with similar issues of cooperation and watching the Texas vote with interest. "I wouldn't be surprised to see some changes in other states," he said.

Hall labeled the plan "a change of some significance." But he said it is not dramatically different from the practice of the national SBC, which adds gifts that bypass the states to the Cooperative Program but labels them differently.

Also during the annual BGCT meeting, Texas Baptists:

-- Defeated an attempt to instruct the state convention's Christian Life Commission to adopt a more restrictive stance on abortion. Debate centered on a CLC position paper that opposes most abortions but allows exceptions in cases of rape, incest, severe fetal deformity incompatible with life, and threats to the life, health or mental stability of the mother. After heated debate, a motion to delete the exceptions was defeated on a ballot vote.

-- Adopted a \$63.5 million 1995 missions-giving goal that includes \$41 million for the Texas Baptist budget and estimates \$22.5 million in gifts to SBC causes.

-- Approved a resolution distancing the state convention from the Southern Baptist Convention's endorsement of the controversial document "Evangelicals and Catholics Together," which was signed by two Southern Baptist leaders and interpreted by some as discouraging evangelism efforts. Other resolutions denounced casino gambling and supported religious liberty and church-state separation.

-- Elected -- in addition to McBride -- Charles Davenport, pastor of First Baptist Church of Tulia, as first vice president and Charles Dodson, pastor of Central Baptist Church in Carthage, as second vice president.

-- Approved a report from their strategy council calling for Texas Baptists to share the gospel with every Texan by the year 2000.

-30-

-- Contributing to this story were Jim Jones of the Fort Worth Star-Telegram, Chuck Lindell of the Austin American-Statesman and Ken Camp of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

## **Texas conservatives vow to organize opposition**

By Chuck Lindell

AMARILLO, Texas (ABP) -- Conservative Texas Baptists, angered after losing another key vote at the annual Baptist General Convention of Texas, have resolved to better organize and perhaps form a separate convention populated by conservative churches.

With statements such as "I've had a bellyful" and "I'm tired of working with these people," several pastors called for an outright split from the moderate-dominated Texas convention.

Others in the crowd of about 175 -- many of them pastors -- at the late Oct. 31 meeting of the Texas Conservative Baptist Fellowship called for a less radical approach -- the formation of a loose-knit organization to promote conservative causes.

Advocates of both approaches called on pastors from the state's leading conservative churches -- including O. S. Hawkins from First Baptist Church of Dallas, Ralph Smith from Hyde Park Baptist Church in Austin and John Bisagno of First Baptist Church of Houston -- to define and lead the organization.

"We will pursue that incorporation ... but that's down the road," Miles Seaborn, president of the Texas Conservative Baptist Fellowship, told those gathered. "(And) we will get the name pastors together."

In the meantime, Seaborn said, his organization will develop strategies allowing churches to send all or most of their missions money to the conservative-led Southern Baptist Convention instead of the moderate Texas convention.

Walt Carpenter, a conservative leader from Houston who has incorporated a rival convention in case leaders want to activate it, was pleased with the pastors' response.

"They were more ready to try a new convention than I thought they were," he said. "I was pleasantly surprised with the aggressiveness of the statements."

However, the re-elected president of the state convention, Jerold McBride, said Nov. 1 he doubted many churches would follow conservative leaders into a rival convention.

"I don't think a lot will come of it," said McBride, pastor of First Baptist Church of San Angelo. "I regret it, but it's not a big concern ... because I don't think it's a big threat."

After Jan. 1, a church may send Cooperative Program funds to any Baptist mission and ministry. Before the change, program funds were divided only between the state convention and the Southern Baptist Convention.

Conservatives opposed the change because program funds can now be sent to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, a moderate missions agency, leaving less money for the more conservative Southern Baptist Convention.

"I'm not going to say much because I'm new to this state, but I recognize a train when it comes rolling down the track," O. S. Hawkins told the conservative gathering. "What this is is an attempt to legitimize the CBF."

Hawkins promised a "drastic" change in the way his church, First Baptist of Dallas, funds the BGCT -- one that will send more money to the national level.

Richard Land, a national conservative leader and executive director of the SBC's Christian Life Commission, predicted that many churches will choose to send their money to the Southern Baptist Convention over the Texas convention.

"This was the beginning of the end of the Baptist General Convention of Texas," he told reporters.

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-- This article reprinted with permission from the Austin (Texas) American-Statesman.

## **Annuity Board trustees change investment policy, as requested**

DALLAS (ABP) -- Trustees of the Southern Baptist Convention Annuity Board followed the wishes of the SBC Executive Committee by adding abortion to the list of industries prohibited in the agency's investment policies but said "no" to a request for copies of all contracts between the Dallas-based Annuity Board and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Paul Powell, Annuity Board president, told trustees meeting in Dallas Oct. 31-Nov. 1 that he will report to the Executive Committee that the board provides a Convention Annuity Plan and traditional group insurance products to the employees and missionaries of the Fellowship, most of whom have career-long accounts with the Annuity Board from prior church or missions service.

Powell said he would send a copy of the Convention Annuity Plan document to the Executive Committee but that "plan supplements," which are unique to each employer, are confidential documents that cannot be shared without permission of the employer.

The Executive Committee, which acts on behalf of the SBC between annual convention meetings, asked the Annuity Board in September to report in writing its "involvement" with the Fellowship -- a moderate, alternative missions-sending agency -- and to forward to the committee copies of all contracts with the CBF.

A second action by the Executive Committee asked the Annuity Board trustees to add "abortion" to the list of "industries" prohibited for investments, and to specify "contributions" of a corporation as reason to prohibit holding that company's stock.

Trustees accepted the report of their investment committee to amend the investment policy to include the abortion industry as a prohibited investment, but declined to change the term "activities" to "contributions."

Executive Committee members wanted the board to exclude investments in companies that contribute to Planned Parenthood and other abortion providers. But Annuity Board officials said that would be impractical.

Board chairman Richard Scott reported that he told the Executive Committee in September that Annuity Board trustees are against abortion, but "it is next to impossible to operationalize this opposition in the way they suggest."

The amended policy section now reads:

"Investment in any company that is publicly recognized (as determined by the Annuity Board internal investment policy committee and the trustee investment committee of the Annuity Board) as being in the liquor, tobacco, gambling, pornography and abortion industries or any company whose products, services or activities are publicly recognized as being incompatible with the moral and ethical posture of the Annuity Board are prohibited."

Scott said he believes the change will satisfy most members of the Executive Committee. He said he was pleased with the Executive Committee response to his assurances and believes "the majority will say we're trying to do what they want."

"We will always try to live by the spirit of our guidelines," said Scott, "but we have to be legal and we have to be faithful to our fiduciary responsibility."

Both Powell and Scott reminded trustees the Annuity Board is still searching for an alternative investment fund for the apparent limited number of participants who desire a fund that would have a much broader screening for such concerns as charitable contributions.

In another matter related to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, trustees voted to honor the request of the Southern Baptist Convention not to accept future relief contributions from the Fellowship. But the board will accept contributions currently held by the CBF for the Annuity Board.

During discussion, trustees said they did not wish to appear to oppose the action of the convention, but also wanted to honor the gifts of churches for the needy. Powell and a number of trustees voiced concern about denying the money to aged ministers and widows in desperate need.

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-- By Tom Miller and Bob Allen

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Following is the complete text of a resolution adopted Oct. 28 by Associated Baptist Press directors in Nashville, Tenn., on ABP's relationship with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship:

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### **ABP directors' resolution, adopted Oct. 28, 1994**

"Associated Baptist Press recently marked four years of existence, providing Baptists with an autonomous source of news. Those four years have demonstrated that ABP is a venture that Baptists want and will support. We began with a promise to be a reliable and credible source of Baptist information. Independent judgments of ABP have found our performance to be unbiased, fair and balanced. The presence of ABP has helped ensure that the Baptist news system not fall captive to bureaucratic control, political intervention or ideological monopoly.

"Since ABP's founding in 1990, much has happened in Baptist life, including the formation of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship as an alternative channel for Baptist churches and individuals to fund ventures like ABP. It is appropriate at this time to recognize and define the relationship that exists between ABP and the Fellowship.

"The directors of Associated Baptist Press acknowledge and appreciate the relationship we share with the Fellowship. We have many intersecting interests, principally the privilege of protecting cherished Baptist

freedoms. Both the founding of ABP and the funding it receives through the Fellowship and other sources are based on a commitment to preserve a free, unfettered flow of information among Baptists. Such a commitment precludes any external influence over the operation of the news service. ABP would resist and reject any attempt to control or influence its news content or judgments.

"We are grateful that the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship shares this commitment. The Fellowship has represented faithfully the wishes of Baptists by channeling significant funding to ABP from the gifts of Baptist churches and individuals. The Fellowship has done this without seeking any control or undue influence over ABP. The Fellowship and its members do not expect or receive preferential treatment from ABP. Neither does the fact the Fellowship serves as a channel for Baptist church and individual contributions to ABP indicate or imply any ownership or control over ABP.

"The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship has been a faithful partner in the cause of a free and responsible Baptist press. ABP looks forward to a positive, lasting working relationship with the Fellowship, as well as with Baptist individuals, churches, state conventions and other organizations that find ABP a worthy investment. Working together in the Baptist tradition of free cooperation, we pledge our best efforts to the task at hand."

**END**

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