

# Associated Baptist Press

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**Fellowship '94 receipts barely top '93,  
but 'real dollars' continue to grow**

By Greg Warner

ATLANTA (ABP) -- Contributions to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship totaled about \$11 million last year, slightly more than 1993, according to figures released by the organization Jan. 31.

The 1994 year-end totals stand in stark contrast to the rapid growth of Fellowship funds in recent years -- up 53 percent in 1993 and 62 percent in 1992. The \$10,955,213 contributed in 1994 is about one tenth of 1 percent more than the \$10,944,328 collected in 1993.

But Fellowship officials say the turnaround was expected after the June vote by the Southern Baptist Convention which instructed its agencies not to accept contributions channeled through the Fellowship. Meanwhile, "real dollars" received for Fellowship use grew almost 20 percent, according to Cecil Sherman, coordinator for the Fellowship.

In recent years, more than a fourth of Fellowship funds have been forwarded to SBC agencies. By cutting off all SBC support from the Fellowship last June, Southern Baptist leaders hoped to isolate the Fellowship from the SBC mainstream or even force the Fellowship out of the Southern Baptist Convention.

While many observers expected the SBC action to reduce funding for the Fellowship, most churches that had been earmarking money for the SBC told the Fellowship to use the money for its own ministries. Although total contributions leveled off, funding for the Fellowship's own programs continued to grow in 1994, said Sherman. "That's a whole lot better indicator (of the organization's health) than gross dollars," he said.

The Fellowship was established by Southern Baptist moderates in 1990, first as a channel for churches and individuals to support selected SBC causes while bypassing agencies they felt were compromised when fundamental-conservatives gained control of the denomination. The Atlanta-based Fellowship now funds its own missions program and a variety of independent ministries.

Of the \$11 million received by the Fellowship in 1994, 83.2 percent was earmarked for the Fellowship and

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the ministries it supports (\$9,113,861). That's up from 66.2 percent in 1993 (\$7,243,791).

Meanwhile, SBC agencies received \$983,760, or 9.0 percent of the total, most of it dispersed before the June action. That's down from 27 percent in 1993. Another \$367,387 in SBC-bound funds received after the June vote was applied to the Fellowship's global missions program.

Most of the Fellowship's own money is spent on its mission work in the United States and abroad. In 1994 \$5.9 million was collected for missions, including \$2,552,732 contributed through the Fellowship's annual global missions offering. The Fellowship's missions program includes support of 52 missionaries.

For the first year of the Fellowship's history, alternative agencies set up in the wake of the SBC controversy received more money from the Fellowship than did traditional SBC institutions. A total of \$1,024,231 was given to "friends of the CBF" -- independent agencies which include Associated Baptist Press, Baptist Center for Ethics, Baptist Joint Committee and two theological seminaries.

Another \$857,591 was designated by Fellowship contributors to support the work of specific state Baptist conventions, accounting for 7.8 percent of Fellowship funds.

A total of 1,337 churches contributed to the Fellowship during the year, compared to the 1,210 in 1993. About half of those churches include the Fellowship in their budget, Sherman said, while the others simply pass along funds designated by individual members.

The Fellowship's year-end total of \$11 million fell short of the \$12.5 million budget goal for 1994, again because of the SBC action. But funds for Fellowship programs surpassed the budget by about half a million dollars.

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### CBF Funding

Funds contributed to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in 1994 went to support the following:

CBF programs	\$8,089,630	73.8 %
Alternative agencies	\$1,024,231	9.3 %
SBC agencies	\$ 983,760	9.0 %
State conventions	\$ 857,591	7.8 %

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### Florida-HMB budget talks 'profitable,' Sullivan says

LEESBURG, Fla. (ABP) -- Discussions prompted by a proposal to alter the relationship between the Florida Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board will likely result in concessions that will cut down on paperwork and give the state more clout in obtaining funds for missions work, leaders learned Jan. 20.

A recent meeting with Home Mission Board officials was "profitable," said Florida Baptist Executive Director John Sullivan in a report to the State Board of Missions. Together the two entities are "hammering out an addendum to the Cooperative Agreement," which spells out how the two agencies conduct missions in Florida, he said.

Asked if the compromise would prevent the national board from unilaterally cutting funding for state

programs, Sullivan replied, "Yes, sir. That's the last part of our negotiations."

Last August, Florida's state budget and allocation committee proposed effectively removing the Home Mission Board from missions work in the state. Instead of sending about \$1.9 million to the Home Mission Board and getting about \$1.3 million of it back to fund HMB-approved projects in the state, the proposal called for Florida to send only the \$600,000 difference to Atlanta and to assume responsibility for the state's total missions program without oversight from the national agency.

At the time, Sullivan said the proposal was prompted by a "unilateral" 6 percent cut in funds given by the HMB to support work in state conventions and the formation of an HMB study committee to "investigate" states which accept funds from churches designated for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, an alternative missions organization whose money SBC agencies are forbidden to accept.

In September the Florida state board agreed to postpone action on the plan at the request of a committee that is studying the structure and programs of the SBC. The structure committee is scheduled to bring a recommendation to the SBC Executive Committee when it meets in Nashville, Tenn., Feb. 20-22.

The HMB committee studying how the agency ought to relate to state conventions which forward designated funds to the Fellowship completed its work in December encouraging "mutual trust" between state and national entities and asking the states to "renew" their support of traditional giving channels, but proposing no sanctions against state conventions which choose also to relate to the Fellowship.

In an interview with James Hefley, a columnist for the Indiana Baptist state convention newspaper, HMB President Larry Lewis said while the Florida budget proposal is on hold, "the possibility of such a funding reduction is still hanging over us."

"I cannot imagine why this sort of funding hold-back will not be intolerable to a lot of churches and members of state conventions," Lewis said.

State-sponsored initiatives to alter traditional denominational relationships, such as efforts in some states to redesign the Cooperative Program unified budgeting process, carry a risk, he said.

"These folks need to remember something: just as SBC national ministries don't have any (operating) money besides what the states send us, so the states don't have any but what the churches send them," Lewis said.

"If a state convention redesigns the Cooperative Program concept to be unacceptable to a church, it's just a short little step for the church to say, 'Hey, we're going to determine how much of our money goes to the SBC and how much goes to the state.'" That could lead congregations to reduce or eliminate giving to the state convention and send more of their money directly to the SBC, Lewis said.

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-- By Bob Allen

## **Conservative Christians should oppose school-prayer amendment, writer says**

By Pam Parry and Shannon Harton

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- Perhaps more than any other group, conservative evangelical Christians should oppose a constitutional amendment to restore state-sponsored prayer in public schools, a representative of a conservative public-policy organization says.

Because evangelical Christians historically have given much attention to doctrinal matters, they ought to be among those most wary of promoting generic prayers in public education, said Joe Loconte, deputy editor of "Policy Review," the quarterly journal of The Heritage Foundation, a conservative public-policy organization based in Washington.

"Vacuous prayers can hardly undo prejudices against faith, nor strengthen the already faithful. Instead, such prayers likely would blunt the edges of some of Christianity's harder truth claims," he said.

Loconte presented his ideas from a journal article during a Jan. 25 forum at The Heritage Foundation's headquarters.

In his article, Loconte debates several arguments commonly used by evangelicals, a group typically supportive of public school prayer.

Some school-prayer proponents argue that American society always has been religious and public prayer is an appropriate reflection of that fact, Loconte said.

However, while the religious orientation present in public education before the 1960s reflected a non-denominational "generalized Protestantism" from the larger culture, he said, many of the religious practices in schools prompted protests by religious minorities.

Evangelicals also contend for school prayer on theological grounds, citing the biblical book of Romans, which describes moral decay that accompanies the rejection of God, he said. School-prayer advocates conclude that public institutions, including schools, deny God at the peril of certain social consequences.

But state-sponsored prayer does not provide social stability but coerced religion, Loconte maintains.

Another common argument for school prayer pleads for "civil order," insisting the recovery of school prayer will reverse alarming societal trends such as teen pregnancy. Many religious conservatives disagree with that view, he said, and some argue it promotes a low view of prayer.

"Religious conservatives ought to be the first to raise objections when spiritual disciplines like prayer are reduced to public exercises to help ward off social ills," Loconte said.

Loconte also rejected the "majority-rules" approach to imposing school prayer. "There is much to be said for communities helping to shape the curricula and moral climate of their public schools. However, when it comes to matters of faith, the majoritarian impulse ignores the lessons of church history," he said.

A majority-prayer rationale ignores diversity of American life and "strikes at the very nature of religious commitment," he said.

"Faith is the most intimate of matters, concerned not with personal preference but with the moral dictates of conscience. And the consciences of society's most vulnerable members -- its children -- require special protection, particularly in a setting as volatile and influential as public education," he said.

"To coerce conscience -- the home of religious experience -- is to invade a realm reserved solely for an individual and his God," he continued.

To address the problem of wanting to avoid offending the consciences of various faith communities, school-prayer proponents have only two options, he said -- either construct prayers devoid of controversial theology or allow every faith group to offer its own prayer. Both have their flaws, he said.

The one-size-fits-all approach weakens the prayer and allows government to meddle in religious affairs, he said, while the ecumenical strategy of allowing every faith group to recite its own prayers could result in "theological vertigo."

"It's one thing to teach a course on world religions in the public schools; the context is academic, factual and impersonal. It is quite another to ask children to join in the prayers of religious believers of other faiths; the setting is emotive, subjective and intensely personal," he said.

Instead of resorting to an unworkable state-sponsored prayer, religious believers should avail themselves of the "legal tools already open to them," Loconte said.

First, evangelical Christians can try to reintroduce the religious dimension of American life in school curricula. Teaching about religion in the classroom is permissible, he said, and some groups already promote teaching about religion in the classroom.

Second, religious conservatives can make full use of the 1984 Equal Access Act which requires that public schools grant to student religious groups the same privileges of other extracurricular groups. Loconte said, even 10 years after the fact, many students are unaware of their rights under the Equal Access Act. He criticized the law, however, as "insufficient in scope," applying only to secondary schools.

In making his case, Loconte quoted a number of evangelical Christians. Steve McFarland, director of the Christian Legal Society's Center for Law and Religious Freedom, was among those quoted. McFarland said he is against attempts to amend the Constitution to reinstate audible, 60-second prayers at the beginning of the school day. That's too much risk for too little gain, he said.

But McFarland would favor an amendment that would once-and-for all settle the church-state disputes of the past 30 years. He would like to see an amendment that addresses all free-exercise issues confronting students. While the Supreme Court has ruled on such issues, he said confusion still abounds.

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## **Former president, accused of stealing from Baptist school, caught on the lam**

JACKSON, Miss. (ABP) -- A former college president charged with embezzling \$1.7 million from the Baptist school he served was arrested in California after failing to appear for a court date in Jackson, Miss.

Lewis Nobles, 69, reportedly collapsed shortly after being apprehended by FBI agents on Jan. 26. He was being held at a San Francisco hospital, where he underwent emergency surgery for an ulcer Jan. 30, reported the Jackson Clarion-Ledger newspaper.

A federal judge ordered a psychiatric evaluation for Nobles, who is suspected of diverting more than \$3 million in donations from Mississippi College, a private Baptist school in Clinton where he was president for 25 years. Because of statutes of limitation, charges against him cover only offenses alleged between Jan. 1, 1989, and Aug. 3, 1993, when school trustees forced Nobles to resign.

The mental-health evaluation and medical problems are expected to delay Nobles' trial, scheduled for Feb. 7. "He is recovering from major surgery," said Amy Whitten, one of his attorneys.

Officials issued a fugitive warrant after Nobles failed to show up for a Jan. 26 hearing in federal court to suppress evidence requested by his lawyers. After a 13-hour manhunt, he was captured at about 10 p.m. at the \$195-a-night Grand Hyatt Hotel in San Francisco's Union Square. Authorities said Nobles had about \$25,000 with him when he was arrested. The FBI seized the money. It is unclear if he was trying to leave the country.

Minutes after his arrest in his hotel room, Nobles was stricken with what FBI agents described as convulsive seizures. He was rushed to San Francisco's St. Francis Memorial Hospital, seven blocks away. He suffers from a history of diabetes and high blood pressure.

Nobles was last seen in Mississippi on Tuesday night, Jan. 24. His beige 1992 Oldsmobile 98 was discovered at the Memphis International Airport on Thursday. The FBI launched a nationwide investigation aimed at returning Nobles to Jackson for trial. Agents would not say how they tracked him to San Francisco.

Nobles had been free on a \$15,000 personal recognizance bond since a Sept. 22 arraignment. He was indicted Sept. 21 on five counts of money-laundering, six counts of mail fraud, four counts of income tax evasion and four counts of the Mann Act, also known as the White Slave Traffic Act., for allegedly causing someone to cross state lines to commit a sex offense.

Prosecutors accuse Nobles of wasting nearly \$400,000 on sexual favors and gifts to prostitutes. Nobles maintains he spent part of the money on scholarships for needy students.

He reportedly told friends he looked forward to his Feb. 7 trial so he could clear his name. Following his 1993 arrest, Nobles told the Baptist Record of Mississippi that "a man is innocent until proven guilty." He told a reporter for the tabloid-television show "A Current Affair" that he was "certainly at peace with my God."

Nobles' successor at Mississippi College refused to comment, but students interviewed by the Clarion-Ledger said they were unfazed by news of Nobles' flight and arrest. Brian Ribeiro, a junior from Houston, said the affair has degenerated from an tragedy to an embarrassment.

"It's really humorous now," he said. "I guess it's been around so long it's a bad joke."

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-- By ABP staff

## **Auschwitz commemoration serves as warning to 'new Europe,' speaker says**

WARSAW, Poland (ABP) -- A commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp should serve "as a warning to the new Europe," where "ethnic cleansing" has reappeared in the Balkans, said a Holocaust survivor at a ceremony Jan. 27.

"We realized that we ourselves could leave Auschwitz, but Auschwitz has never left us," said Maurice Goldstein, who described himself as one of the few surviving inmates at nearby Birkenau when it was captured by Soviet soldiers on his 23rd birthday in 1945.

"The voices of those who cried for humanity here are silent now. It is those who survived who must continue to speak on their behalf," said Goldstein, chairman of the International Auschwitz Committee, which administers the former camp complex.

According to Ecumenical News International, representatives and heads of states from more than 30 countries, along with officials from Poland's Jewish, Christian and Muslim communities, observed the anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi camp at which 1.5 million victims died during World War II. Parts of the two-day ceremony, conducted amid high winds and snow, were covered live on Polish and German television.

Diplomats and politicians attending drew up an "Appeal for World Peace," which was read at a memorial service that concluded with delegation leaders laying wreaths at Auschwitz's Death Wall and a symbolic recitation of first names.

Seven Nobel Peace Prize winners attended, including Elie Weisel, the Jewish writer who represented U.S. President Bill Clinton at the anniversary.

Planning for the anniversary was marred by controversy when several Jewish groups complained that an organizing committee nominated by Polish President Lech Walesa failed to respect Jewish feelings.

At a private prayer meeting, Jean Kahn, head of the European Jewish Congress, said Jewish organizations would continue to resist efforts to "Christianize the Holocaust by the Catholic Church."

At least 90 percent of Auschwitz victims were Jewish, but tens of thousands of Poles, Russians and Gypsies also were murdered in the camp's gas chambers.

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-- By ABP staff

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Please replace the Jan. 26 story bearing this headline with this revised version. It includes new information and a correction.

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## Little Rock BSU director asked to resign over beliefs

By Bob Allen

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (ABP) -- A veteran Baptist campus minister in Little Rock, Ark., has stepped down because of questions about his beliefs.

Dan McCauley, 50, Baptist Student Union director at the University of Arkansas in Little Rock since 1977, was asked by supervisors to resign or face firing following recent complaints about his theology by two students and their pastor, according to sources.

Don Moore, executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, told members of the state's executive board that McCauley's views on biblical authority, extra-biblical revelation and security of the believer "differ significantly from our commonly held faith" as Southern Baptists, the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine reported in its Dec. 29 issue.

Moore described McCauley's views to executive board members at a meeting Dec. 13, based on an interview he had with the campus minister.

McCauley believes the Holy Spirit, and not the Bible, is the final authority for the Christian, Moore said. "Whatever ... the Holy Spirit reveals to him, that is his authority," Moore said. Such "subjective criteria ... leaves us with no absolute truth" and "subverts the faith of young believers," Moore charged.

Moore said that McCauley believes in divine inspiration for writings other than the Bible and has studied extensively a New Age religion called Urantia, "a mixture of space science, Hinduism, mysticism and Christianity which was supposed to have been given by extra-terrestrial beings." McCauley's "openness to receive truth wherever he finds it is frightening," Moore said.

Concerning the security of believers, McCauley breaks "with our commonly held faith that personal redemption is once for all secured to those who by repentance and faith are born into the Kingdom," Moore said. "It is the opinion of the administration that a person holding such divergent views should not be supported by churches that would insist on their pastors believing in the security of the believer."

Moore told the Arkansas newspaper that McCauley's disputed views "have not been taught in formal settings but have been communicated in conferences with individuals and with the staff from time to time."

The executive board voted overwhelmingly to sustain the administration's actions.

As a condition of his severance agreement, McCauley said, he is not free to discuss details of the resignation. He is on leave of absence with pay until March 31.

However, in a text of a sermon he preached Jan. 15 at a Little Rock church, McCauley said he believes "there is some misunderstanding" about his views.

McCauley said he believes the Bible is "fully inspired by the Holy Spirit" and "totally sufficient in leading us into an understanding of who God is and our responsibility in that relationship."

However, he said, "I believe the Bible is a tool to lead us to God, not a substitute for a relationship with God."

"We are not 'born again' through our relationship to the Bible but through our relationship with God," he said. "My position is that ultimate authority should only be given to God as revealed in Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit."

Without the Holy Spirit's role to "convict" the believer of the truths contained in Scripture, commitment to the Bible can descend into "bibliolatry," a "heresy (that) is hindering people from entering the kingdom of heaven," he said.

McCauley said he does believe God is revealed outside the Bible as well. "Even though I believe the Bible to be sufficient, I do not believe the Bible to contain all there is to know about truth," he said. "I believe the scriptures when they testify that God is truth. And whereas neither science nor philosophy nor religion can contain

the whole of God, where there is truth in science, it is of God; where there is truth in philosophy, it is of God; and where there is truth in religion, it is of God."

Concerning the possibility that believers may "fall from grace" and lose their salvation, McCauley said, "I believe that what God holds in the palm of his hand cannot be snatched by any other power on earth or in the spiritual realms, but I believe we do not lose our free will just because we are saved or born-again."

Acknowledging that some people regard the possibility of apostasy as being "contrary to Scripture," McCauley countered that the issue "is just a matter of interpretation and emphasis."

"Why would I even suggest to a student that it may be possible to reject our covenant with God?" McCauley asked. "Cheap grace. For decades we have been baptizing young people in our churches who see Jesus only as Savior, not Lord."

"Can I, in good conscience, sit back and allow my students to believe that all God desires from us is our name on a church membership role somewhere?" he asked. "I think not."

Some of McCauley's supporters say that his views were not only misunderstood but did not get a fair hearing before he was asked to resign.

While Moore insists that McCauley's theological positions have been a concern for years, his supporters say the problem surfaced only recently, when two students discussed their concerns with their pastor. The pastor reportedly arranged a meeting with Moore, at which the students repeated their concerns.

Later, at an annual performance review, McCauley learned for the first time he was in danger of being fired, according to Fred Ball, pastor of Lakeshore Drive Baptist Church in Little Rock and a long-time friend of McCauley.

McCauley was sent back to work with a warning against aberrant teaching, Ball said. Then, a few weeks later, McCauley was called in for another meeting, where Moore told him "he just didn't have a peace about" the arrangement and demanded McCauley's immediate resignation within four days, according to Ball.

McCauley's pastor, Walter Draughon of Calvary Baptist Church in Little Rock, intervened to negotiate a postponed resignation date to give McCauley time to find another job. Moore and McCauley at first agreed he would work through May 15 and receive six weeks' severance pay in accordance with personnel policies. After learning that several members of the executive board questioned why a staff member with McCauley's theology would be allowed to stay until May, McCauley offered to step down Dec. 31 with full pay and benefits through March 31, followed by six weeks' severance pay, a compromise which Moore accepted.

Other than the two students who initiated the complaint against McCauley, "no other student from the BSU was ever talked to," said BSU president Joey Cobble, a senior at UALR. Cobble said he was never invited to meet with state convention leaders about concerns over McCauley's alleged teachings, even though he faxed a letter to the state convention office asking for a meeting. Cobble said he received only a phone call from David James, the state BSU director.

The controversy over McCauley's termination divided the BSU, pitting friends of the two students "who got the ball rolling" against other active members close to the minister, said Cobble.

When the two groups sat down together, "We found out some of the ministers involved were kind of turning the two factions in the BSU against each other," Cobble said. Since that discussion, "a healing process of sorts" has begun, he said.

An interim director from out of state has been hired for the semester, he said.

"The mood in the BSU right now is a lot better than I ever thought it would have been," said Cobble. "The ministry -- I don't think has been hindered. I think there still might be some problems with trust for a while."

Cobble said support for McCauley was strong among BSU members, even for students who did not agree with everything he taught.

"Dan was a real deep thinker who would challenge you. Some people respond to that better than others," he said. "Even those people who weren't as close to Dan felt an injustice had been done."

Students were aware that McCauley's mother had died only a few days before he was asked to resign and that he was also dealing with other family problems. Also, it was right before Christmas. "It was just a really, really

bad time for a person to be told to resign quietly before Monday," Cobble said.

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CORRECTION: In three stories issued Dec. 8, the name of K. Martin-Kury was misspelled. The error was not discovered until this week. We apologize for not notifying you earlier. The three stories are headlined: "Hark! Americans herald renewed interest in angels," "Half of all Americans believe they have guardian angels," and "Little known about 'dark side' of angels."

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**END**