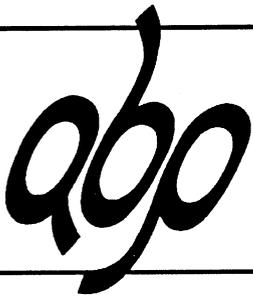


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**Executive Committee declines to limit  
partnerships with state conventions**

By Bob Allen

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (ABP) -- The Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee voted Sept. 17 to officially refuse funds from a breakaway state convention in Missouri, but declined to limit itself to cooperating with only one convention in a state in all circumstances.

Responding to a motion referred from the convention this summer, the Executive Committee declined to recommend limiting to one the number of conventions in a particular state it authorizes to collect funds on behalf of the SBC.

Bob Stephenson, a layman from First Baptist Church of Norman, Okla., who made the motion at the SBC annual meeting in June, said the Executive Committee "appears to set a double standard" by recognizing competing state conventions in Virginia and Texas, while refusing to work with the Baptist General Convention of Missouri, which broke away from the Missouri Baptist Convention last year.

Stephenson asked Executive Committee members to enforce "a clear and consistent policy" in relating to state conventions, even if it winds up costing them money.

"I do not share the Executive Committee's enthusiasm for the 2000 'Baptist Faith and Message,'" Stephenson said in a statement to a subcommittee that he also released to the media. "I do respect the consistent manner in which the members of this committee have previously held their convictions. I encourage you to be true to your convictions and demonstrate it by facing whatever repercussions ensue from enforcing a clear and consistent policy."

Executive Committee President Morris Chapman said a long history of relationships exists between the SBC and both the Baptist General Association of Virginia and the Baptist General Convention of Texas. He said the Executive Committee recognizes upstart conventions in those states only because problems developed in those historic relationships, but neither of those state groups nor the SBC has indicated a desire to wholly sever ties.

In contrast, the Missouri Baptist Convention strongly supports the SBC, Chapman said, and it wouldn't be in Southern Baptists' best interest to recognize a new convention that competes for funding and loyalty with the existing state body.

"There's quite a difference between holding on to an existing partnership and deciding if you want to enter into a new partnership," Chapman said.

"[I]t is the exclusive prerogative of the Southern Baptist Convention to determine the identity and the number of regional Baptist bodies . who may collect funds on behalf of the Southern Baptist Convention, and it may be in the best interest of the Southern Baptist Convention, from time to time, to terminate or enter into agreements with particular regional bodies for the collection of Southern Baptist Convention funds .," the Executive Committee said in its response.

"We decline to recommend limiting the number of conventions that are recognized, and secondly we do not recognize . the Baptist General Convention of Missouri as a collecting agency for the Southern Baptist Convention," said Roy Sparkman, an Executive Committee member from Wichita Falls, Texas, who chairs the bylaws work group.

In August, the Executive Committee's business office returned \$395 that the Baptist General Convention of Missouri had forwarded from a church to the Annie Armstrong home missions offering. Explaining that the Executive Committee won't accept funds from the new Missouri convention, Executive Committee vice president Jack Wilkerson suggested in a letter that the church either make the contribution directly to the SBC or pass it through the Missouri Baptist Convention.

The Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia state convention formed in 1996, followed by the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention in 1998. Both groups cited differences with moderate leaders of their respective state conventions and pledged loyalty to the conservative leadership of the SBC.

Both of the new state conventions participate in the Cooperative Program unified giving plan that allows churches to fund both their respective state convention and the SBC by writing a single check.

The BGAV and BGCT continue to channel funds from member churches to the SBC, but their leaders have criticized the national convention for policies -- such as requiring missionaries and seminary professors to affirm the 2000 "Baptist Faith and Message" -- that they say marginalize moderates.

But Chapman said even that might change over time. "There is always the possibility that God can bring about miracles that we cannot anticipate today," he said.

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## **Executive Committee closes doors to discuss TV network restructuring**

By Bob Allen

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (ABP) -- The Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee went into a rare executive session Sept. 17 to discuss a request by the SBC North American Mission Board to convert its FamilyNet television network from a non-profit to a for-profit subsidiary.

In other business at a Sept. 16-17 meeting in Nashville, Tenn., the Executive Committee approved changes to ministry statements governing the International Mission Board. The board's chairman also announced he was reactivating a committee to study the SBC's membership in the Baptist World Alliance.

The full Executive Committee met 35 minutes behind closed doors to review "confidential material" provided to committee members and staff. Earlier committee discussions on the issue were also closed to outsiders.

NAMB leaders say Southern Baptists will need private investors in order to raise an estimated \$75 million it would take to establish a major presence in television. Currently, NAMB spends about \$6 million a year for FamilyNet, which in turn generates about \$3 million in income.

A recommendation distributed before the executive session noted for the record that the Executive Committee had received the NAMB request and planned to "consider action on this matter at some future meeting after further exchange of information and when formal documentation has been prepared and submitted for review and approval."

After the meeting, Executive Committee President Morris Chapman said in an interview that the committee desired to discuss "matters of financial and legal" concern privately before saying anything in public.

Gary Smith, chairman of the Executive Committee, said he sensed in the closed discussion "exhilaration and excitement about the possibility of expanding our broadcasting capability across the nation."

Background information provided to Executive Committee members and observers prior to the meeting included a letter from NAMB President Robert Reccord describing details of the proposal, except for one section excised dealing with "legal matters considered privileged at this stage and inappropriate for public discussion."

Executive Committee members were given the full letter in executive session.

FamilyNet presently is carried on cable 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in about 2.9 million homes. To become a "player in the industry and truly penetrate the culture," they say, would require at least 30 million "24-7" homes, Reccord said in his letter in the background-information packet.

The restructuring plan calls for establishing guidelines for doctrinal accountability, to determine who qualifies as an investor, to ensure that NAMB and the SBC control the type of programming and articulate an "exit strategy" to protect Southern Baptist assets and programming should the deal ever fall through.

The new for-profit FamilyNet would be formed from three existing NAMB subsidiaries: FamilyNet, a non-profit entity; TimeRite, a for-profit advertising subsidiary; and DFW Uplink, a non-profit subsidiary that includes operations for satellite transmission.

NAMB is proposing that it lend \$9 million to the for-profit venture over three years, and continue to provide programming with estimated value of \$1 million a year.

Trustees of NAMB voted unanimously in a called meeting Aug. 13 to approve the reorganization plan, subject to approval by the Executive Committee and the Southern Baptist Convention.

In other business, Executive Committee chairman Gary Smith, pastor of Fielder Road Baptist Church in Arlington, Texas, announced that he was reactivating a committee to evaluate the Southern Baptist Convention's relationship with the Baptist World Alliance.

The committee disbanded in 1998 after recommending that the SBC not withdraw from the worldwide fellowship of Baptist conventions and unions. One recommendation, however, called for "ongoing review" of the relationship.

The original study dealt with "concerns and questions" among Southern Baptist leaders about reports of liberal theology and a perception that the organization isn't evangelistic enough. After meeting several times with BWA leaders, the SBC satisfied those concerns, keeping its annual contribution of about \$400,000 to the BWA in the budget.

Executive Committee President Morris Chapman said in an interview that reactivating the committee comes in response to a July vote by the BWA's General Council to consider a membership application from the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Chapman, who strongly opposed that action, said it indicates a lack of understanding and communication between the BWA and SBC, and a need to "build relationships."

Members of the study committee include Chapman; LifeWay Christian Resources President Jimmy Draper; International Mission Board President Jerry Rankin; Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

President Paige Patterson; former SBC president Tom Elliff; and Paul Pressler, a former Executive Committee officer.

In other action, the Executive Committee approved changes proposed by the International Mission Board in the agency's own statement of its ministry assignments.

The revisions include incorporating "nurturing church-planting movements," which supporting information describes as "the primary, if not only way, of making the gospel potentially accessible to all people."

The document speaks of "sending" missionaries, as opposed to "appointing," a narrower term in the old statement that doesn't take into account the agency's widespread use of volunteers.

It also adds a reference to mobilizing Southern Baptists in local churches, associations and state conventions to pray, volunteer and give sacrificially to missions. At the request of an Executive Committee work group, an added phrase specifies that such financial support is through the Cooperative Program and Lottie Moon Offering.

It calls for assisting international Baptist leaders with discipleship and training, but deletes a specific reference to developing "schools." Some have criticized the IMB's recent emphasis on church planting for neglecting institutions like schools and hospitals. IMB officials say that is just a perception.

The new statement still affirms the IMB's commitment to ministries such as community health and hunger relief, designed to "meet human needs and share the gospel."

IMB leaders say the changes are cosmetic and do not reflect any major changes in missions strategy. The new statements, they say, remove outdated language and are more precise in describing the agency's current approach.

"There is no change whatsoever in what they do," said Executive Committee member Frank Cox, who presented the ministry statements for approval. "They do this just to bring up to date the verbiage of what they do."

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## **SBC president calls for 'radical' commitment**

By Bob Allen

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (ABP) -- Southern Baptists need to get "real" about the spiritual condition of their churches and "radical" about their mission, says Jack Graham, president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

In remarks Sept. 16 to the SBC Executive Committee, Graham, pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, Texas, said two million people die in the United States each year, many without Christ. Worldwide, he said, 52 million "step out into eternity to face a judgment and eternity without Christ."

Yet, he said, many churches struggle with baptizing new believers.

"We have to get real, and then get radical about our mission," he said. "Our world has been shocked by radicals, thugs, terrorists, murderers, extremists. In one sense, our world is a world full of extremists. Those of us who name the name of Jesus and who are called to the kingdom for such a time as this, we need to get radical in our love for people."

Graham said he is thankful for Southern Baptist leaders who have stood against a trend in society to view all religions as the same.

"The world is willing for us to say, 'Jesus is the way, the truth and the life,'" he said. "'That's good for you. Stop there.' But we can't stop there. Jesus didn't stop there. He didn't only say, 'I am the way, the truth and the life,' he said, 'I am the way, the truth and the life, and no man comes to the Father but by me.'"

Graham lauded leaders like Al Mohler and Richard Land, whom he said are "not ashamed of the gospel of Christ in the public sector."

"I'm so grateful that Southern Baptists are not backing up and apologizing for our King."

Graham also affirmed the SBC's emphasis on the family. A special rally for the family is planned in conjunction with the convention's annual meeting next June in Phoenix.

"The greatest cultural and societal issue in our time is the potential disintegration and devaluation of the family," Graham said. "Southern Baptists at this time . are saying we are committed to the biblical family and to establishing godly, Christian homes. This is a must-do."

He also lauded work by LifeWay Christian Resources in developing resources for Christian schools.

"I think it's time that Southern Baptist churches and associations and groups of churches look more seriously at starting kingdom schools, Christian schools," Graham said.

Graham said he might not have said that five years ago, when he felt starting a school was all right for some but not for him. "I believe it is time we look more seriously . at starting at the earliest years and start developing disciples."

Graham said he is "very excited and enthusiastic" about Empowering Kingdom Growth, a new SBC emphasis on focusing priorities on Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom of God.

"I believe that Southern Baptists are prepared and are ready as never before to come to the kingdom for such a time as this," Graham said, "at a very critical time in our nation and world."

Graham said Southern Baptists' urgency comes from their belief in the literal return of Christ to the earth, quoting Jesus' prayer, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

"Every time we pray the Lord's Prayer, the model prayer, we're praying for the Second Coming of Christ," Graham said.

"We live in expectation of our King, and we serve and we work and we pray and, as Southern Baptists, get real. We get it done because our King is coming. The emergency and the urgency of our times demand it."

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## **Trustees support president in grade-tampering dispute**

By Tony Cartledge and Steve DeVane

-- EDITOR'S NOTE: This story updates and replaces an earlier story released last Friday.

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. (ABP) -- Trustees of Gardner-Webb University have expressed "full confidence" in President Christopher White, despite a censure by the school's faculty over a grade-tampering incident involving a star athlete.

Faculty handed down a 63-39 "no confidence" vote in White Sept. 10 after a newspaper reported that he had ordered changes to the transcript of a basketball player who otherwise would have been ineligible to play. The vote meant that faculty wanted trustees to remove White as president of the Baptist-affiliated school in Boiling Springs, N.C.

Trustees, however, at a Sept. 13 meeting held off campus, "expressed full confidence" in White and affirmed his leadership, according to a statement.

Trustees also began a "full and thorough" investigation into the dispute and expressed "profound apology" to Carlos Webb, a former student at the center of the controversy, "for any embarrassment caused to him and his family."

According to a Sept. 10 report in the Shelby (N.C.) Star, Webb lacked the academic standing to play basketball shortly before the start of the 2000-2001 season. One factor was that he was caught cheating in an introduction to religion class he took in the fall semester of 1999 and given an "F." Webb retook the class that summer and made a "D."

Normally, when a student fails a class and then retakes it and passes, the failing grade is dropped from a student's record. When cheating is involved, however, both the failing and passing grades are averaged together. Under that policy, Webb's grade-point average was below the minimum to qualify to play basketball.

Just before the start of the basketball season, White wrote a memo to Gardner-Webb registrar Stephen Sain, ordering him to treat the summer course as a normal repeat. White said he based his decision after investigating "circumstances regarding" the grades.

White said Webb got bad advice from a "senior level" official, whom he refused to identify. "When a senior-level official does a dumb thing like that, it puts me in a bad position," White wrote in the memo. "But we put the student's welfare first."

Webb went on to average more than 16 points a game that year, leading Gardner-Webb to a 22-10 record and a championship in the National Christian Collegiate Athletic Association tournament.

The NCAA was expected to investigate the incident.

Gil Blackburn, Gardner-Webb's academic dean, told the Biblical Recorder newspaper that he doubted White's story about the adviser error.

"The honor code should not be set aside on flimsy excuses such as 'bad advice,'" he said. "Cheating has consequences and the penalties should stand, whether the student is a star athlete or undistinguished."

Blackburn said athletic officials asked him three times to allow Webb's passing grade to override the failure for cheating. He refused each time.

Blackburn also said faculty leaders asked White to take the lead in cleaning up the controversy. Some wanted White to offer to resign, and then let the faculty "judge whether he's the person who can lead us back from the humiliation," Blackburn said.

The no-confidence vote "would suggest that the faculty wasn't satisfied with his response," Blackburn said.

White admitted making a mistake to the faculty and asked for forgiveness. He pleaded for "no mad rush to judgment" at the emergency faculty meeting Sept. 10. Classes were canceled so faculty could attend.

"I conducted an investigation that was far too cursory, and I made a decision that was very, very bad," he said, according to a news report. "At the time, I felt that I had the authority to do that, and that I was siding with the student."

"Despite those who disagree with me, the fact that he was an athlete did not matter," White said.

Blackburn, who at the same meeting received a show of faculty support by a 112-5 vote, told the Shelby newspaper that he knew about the situation two years ago, but did not report it to the NCAA or faculty. "I wish to God I had screamed bloody murder two years ago," he said.

In the interview with the Recorder, Blackburn said he rationalized that he had done his duty by rejecting calls to change Webb's grades. He said he was in a "moral quandary" over whether he should report the matter.

"I feel I can be legitimately criticized for not making it known," he said. "I can't give you a good reason why I didn't."

Other faculty members criticized White during the meeting, according to the Star, which covered a portion of the meeting before the faculty voted to close it to outsiders.

"There are two honor codes, one for students that have a good jump shot and another for others," said Phil Williams, associate vice president of academic affairs.

Darlene Gravett, dean of the graduate school, told the Star that a no-confidence vote indicates that faculty members no longer have confidence in White as a leader.

Blackburn said faculty members were told that a confidence vote would indicate that they thought White should continue to lead the school. A no-confidence vote would indicate a request that trustees change the leadership of the school.

But some faculty members voiced confidence in White.

Wayne Stacy, dean of the divinity school, issued a statement that he said spoke only for him as a member of the faculty.

"In my view, the special called university faculty meeting of this past Tuesday was precipitous, reactionary, unnecessary and counterproductive. If the faculty felt compelled to make a statement about this issue, it could have done so at its regular faculty meeting later in the month, most likely with more information and greater clarity," Stacy said.

"The president made a mistake. He's both owned it and asked forgiveness for it. In my judgment, one mistake does not negate 16 years of outstanding service as president of this university. He has my complete confidence and full support."

Trustees, who were not scheduled to meet before October, put together a hastily called meeting to review actions and charges made in the called faculty meeting.

"We are concerned for the well-being of the faculty, students, staff and the entire Gardner-Webb community at this time," trustee chairman Thomas Hardin said in a statement following the board meeting. "We assure them that the trustees are seeking to maintain and enhance the operations of the university and its commitment to academic excellence."

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-- Bob Allen contributed to this story

## **Anderson takes new position as CBF missions advocate**

By Greg Warner

ATLANTA (ABP) - Patrick Anderson, coordinator of Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Florida, will resign that position to go to work for the national Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Beginning Jan. 1, Anderson will fill the newly created position of missions advocate for CBF Global Missions. His role will involve speaking, writing, leading missions tours and working with development and fund raising. It is an unsalaried contract position, considered less than full time.

Anderson will work out of Lakeland, Fla., and retain his position as professor of criminology at Florida Southern College there. A search is underway to fill his position with CBF of Florida, which he has held since the organization was formed. His wife, Carolyn, will continue her work as full-time assistant coordinator with the organization.

Anderson served as the national CBF's moderator, its top elected post, in 1995-96. He was on CBF's national Coordinating Council for five years and served as an officer four years.

"I am thrilled to be a part of CBF Global Missions," Anderson said in a statement. "I cannot imagine any work that is more suited to my gifts and calling, and I look forward to giving full attention to CBF missions advocacy."

Anderson will work closely with Gary and Barbara Baldrige, co-coordinators of CBF Global Missions. "We are delighted to have on the CBF Global Missions team an articulate and enthusiastic missions advocate of Pat's caliber," said Gary Baldrige. Anderson "knows the CBF Global Missions fields of service as well as anyone in CBF life," he said.

Baldrige also acknowledged Anderson's speaking and writing skills. In addition to writing a popular criminology textbook for college and a book on missions, Anderson has written for CBF publications and the organization's Web site. In 1990, Anderson founded Resources for Romania, a non-profit organization working alongside Romanian Christians.

In 1991 the CBF of Florida was constituted and Anderson hired. One of the oldest state CBF organizations, it has been an innovator in missions, beginning with relief work in the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew in 1992. "When CBF churches in Florida responded so quickly, we looked around and said, 'We really could make a difference,'" Anderson recalled.

CBF of Florida has an annual budget of approximately \$650,000, most of it spent on missions. "My experience in leading CBF-Florida has been the most meaningful and important work of my life," Anderson said.

A graduate of Furman University and Southwestern Seminary, Anderson earned a Ph.D. in criminology from Florida State University. He has taught at Florida Southern College since 1986. Anderson has served as a bivocational pastor and interim pastor in churches in South Carolina, Oklahoma, Texas, Louisiana and Florida. He is a former first vice president of the Florida Baptist Convention.

He and Carolyn have three married children and three granddaughters.

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