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News & Advice of the Southern Baptist Convention

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February 25, 1971

**SBC Executive Committee Sets  
1972 Budget Recommendations**

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, after hearing pleas for increased operating funds and financial projections of income unequal to the needs, voted here to recommend a nine-month SBC budget for 1972 of \$24.6 million, an increased of 3.37 per cent.

The convention, moving to a new fiscal year in October of 1972, will operate from Jan. 1 to Sept. 30, 1972, on the same basic operating budget for nine months as the 1971 budget level, if the proposed 1972 budget is adopted by the convention in St. Louis.

The budget increase would come in the capital needs section rather than in the operating section, SBC officials said. Amount of the proposed increase is \$787,500, or 3.37 per cent. The 1.79 per cent increase in Cooperative Program funds in 1970 created a \$932,000 deficit in approved capital funds. It is anticipated that another \$1,050,000 will be added to this deficit in 1971.

On a nine-month basis, the proposed budget includes \$21,8 million in operating funds; \$932,927 for capital funds not reached in 1970; \$1,050,000 in capital funds not expected to be reached in 1971; plus the \$787,500 in capital needs for 1972.

In other actions, the Executive Committee voted partially on the basis of new hotel construction to recommend Norfolk, Va., for the second time as the proposed site of the 1976 Southern Baptist Convention session, approved a study committee report expressing support for a Negro Baptist seminary in Nashville, one commission member had advocated closing, and recommended that members to boards of trustees for Baptist agencies be nominated without regard to race, sex, or national origin.

The Executive Committee took further steps to phase out the Hospital Agency of the SBC by recommending bylaws changes for action at the 1971 convention in St. Louis; expressed belief that the "Baptist Faith and Message" Statement of 1963 is "not amendable;" and recommended that no action be taken to change the basis of representation in the Southern Baptist Convention.

The budget, bylaws changes, and recommended site for the 1976 convention must be approved by the convention when it meets in St. Louis, June 1-4.

Most of the time during the committee meeting was spent grappling with the budget. During a full day of budget hearings, 20 SBC agencies presented pleas for increased operating funds totalling \$34.1 million.

During a subcommittee meeting, however, financial projections were presented indicating that anticipated Cooperative Program (unified budget) income for 1971 would be about \$29.2 million--enough to meet the operating budget, but not enough to pay the 1971 capital needs, nor the 1970 capital needs not met last year.

The budget that was recommended, though only an increase of \$787,500 over the 1971 budget, is actually an increase of more than \$2.9 million over anticipated 1971 receipts, if the nine-month budget recommended is projected on a 12-month basis.

During discussion of the budget, R. Jack Robinson, pastor in Augusta, Ga., said that the committee was faced with urgent needs for operating increases totalling more than \$5 million, yet because of capital needs that must be paid, the amount of available funds for the operating section was only about \$50,000 more in 1972 than in 1971.

"We are heart-sick," Robinson said. "We felt that if we did it this way (recommended no operating increases for 1972), everyone would feel the need equally, and we would all go home and do our best to see that we come back next year with a chance to do some expanding in the operating budgets."

Baker J. Cauthen, executive secretary of the SBC Foreign Mission Board, in an impassioned plea to the committee, said that it was the first time since World War II that the SBC has not been able to increase operating funds, and that the "burdens will be felt" all around the world.

He urged the committee members and SBC leaders present to return home and do everything possible to create an atmosphere of challenge to "pour all we can into the Cooperative Program so that what we've done today will never occur again."

Cecil Ray, Stewardship Division director for the Baptist General Convention of Texas, pointed out that even though operating funds were not increased, the proposed goal for 1972 on a 12-month basis is not a decline--it is a major advance of nearly \$3 million over anticipated receipts in 1971.

Porter W. Routh, executive secretary of the SBC Executive Committee, warned against leaving with a spirit of pessimism, suggesting rather that members should go "rejoicing with optimism that receipts during January and February have increased substantially. We hope and pray that the economy and stewardship of Southern Baptists will stay above four per cent increase in giving, and let's all pray and work to that end," Routh said.

In a related, but separate action, the Executive Committee voted to authorize the treasurer to make 1971 operating budget distributions on the full amounts allocated, unless the percent of increase in giving for 1971 should fall below four per cent. In that case, the treasurer was instructed "to send no operating funds in excess of 7.32 per cent increase" over 1970 allocations "until all agencies receiving less than 7.32 per cent have received their authorized increase."

With the exception of the budget, most of the other discussion was devoted to a recommendation from the administration committee suggesting that the SBC vote on either Norfolk, Va., or Detroit, as alternative choices for the 1976 convention site.

After lengthy discussion, the Executive Committee voted 22-9 to amend the subcommittee's recommendation by eliminating Detroit, and recommending for the second straight year that the convention meet in Norfolk, June 15-17, 1976. Last year, when a similar recommendation was made, the SBC referred the matter back to the committee for more study.

Major objection to Norfolk as a meeting site was voiced by Rufus Spraberry, pastor from Mineral Wells, Tex., who cited a clause in SBC convention procedures which states that no city shall be considered in which "there is a considerable distance between the available hotels and the convention hall."

About two-thirds of the 6,000 available hotel rooms for the Norfolk site are about 18 miles away (24 minutes by freeway) in Virginia Beach, but the subcommittee, after investigating the situation, said it felt strongly that Norfolk should be recommended.

Several committee members voiced objections to Detroit as a site, saying they had a "bad experience" with hotels there during the 1966 convention session.

Discussion also was prompted by a subcommittee recommendation that the SBC committee on committees and the committee on boards be requested to consider representation of ethnic groups on convention boards, agencies, commissions and committees.

An amendment proposed by Lamar Jackson of Birmingham, Ala., was approved expanding the scope of the recommendation by reminding the two committees that there are no constitutional provisions limiting nomination of such trustees and committee members on the basis of age, national origin, sex or race.

Most of the discussion centered around the question of why "ethnic groups" should be singled out and made a "special category."

On a similar subject, the Executive Committee approved a committee study which in effect gave a vote of confidence to American Baptist Theological Seminary, Nashville, a predominately black Bible school with about 80 students. The school is operated jointly by the SBC and the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A. Inc.

Last year Guy Bellamy, retired director of work with National Baptists for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, urged that the school be closed because, he said, it had served its usefulness in an age when black students should be encouraged to attend integrated institutions. Bellamy, a member of the seminary's commission, has since resigned as a commissioner.

The committee study quoted seminary officials, black leaders and students as saying the school met a definite need and there was no other school of its type students could attend, that Negro Baptists had increased their financial support, and that the school is a "mission-undertaking."

On the action regarding the recommendation that the SBC discontinue the "Hospital Agency of the Southern Baptist Convention," the Executive Committee urged the board members to seek compliance with SBC action in Denver to change the names of the hospitals in New Orleans and Jacksonville, Fla., so it will be clear that they are not state Baptist convention or SBC institutions.

Last year, the convention severed ties with the two hospitals and set up procedures in a two-year sequence to divest itself of the hospital agency. The bylaws changes approved for recommendation to the convention would be the final stage of the process.

Two other actions by the Executive Committee referred to previous votes of the SBC. One responded to a request from James L. Sullivan of the SBC Sunday School Board asking the committee to clarify procedures necessary to change the "Baptist Faith and Message" statement. The committee said it believed the statement was "not amendable," since it is "the articles of faith of the 1963 convention."

A second action referring to a previous convention request recommended that no change be made in the basis of representation in the SBC "because it is our opinion that no idea or suggestion has been made thus far that would improve the existing basis of representation of messengers" to the SBC.

It was pointed out that the committee held three "public hearings" to obtain opinions on how SBC representation could or should be changed, but a total of five people showed up for two hearings. An opinion poll conducted in connection with the study showed that more than 90 per cent of SBC pastors, deacon chairmen and Woman's Missionary Union presidents surveyed felt the present system should be retained.

The Executive Committee asked its program committee to study proposals by the SBC Radio and Television Commission for that agency's program statement to allow TIMERITE, a subsidiary corporation of the commission, to work in the print media area. Past operations by TIMERITE in this area have exceeded the scope and intention of the program statement, the action stated. TIMERITE was asked to discontinue these operations.

Another recommendation outlined procedures whereby the Radio-TV Commission and SBC Sunday School Board could make agreements for the sale of recordings produced by the commission.

A subcommittee study of SBC radio and television operations asked the SBC Foreign Mission Board and the Radio-TV Commission to work out guidelines and procedures for overseas radio and TV operations within one year; and urged the commission to explore with the SBC Home Mission Board the "possibility of greater use of radio and TV to win America to Christ."

A request to allow the Southern Baptist Foundation to change its program statement to "solicit" endowments and trust funds to benefit SBC causes was tabled by the committee.

The Executive Committee also recommended a specific plan for SBC promotion efforts during 1973-74 carrying out the theme, "Share the Word Now." The plan will be presented for action during the SBC in St. Louis, June 1-4.

Resolutions were adopted expressing appreciation for the work of the late Davis C. Woolley, head of the SBC Historical Commission; retiring Oklahoma executive T. B. Lackey, and Tom Holloway of the American Bible Society.



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