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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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**Shortfall Delays 1985-86
Cooperative Program Planning**

By Craig Bird

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—The 1985-86 goal for the national unified budget of the Southern Baptist Convention will not be set until February 1985—five months later than usual.

The SBC Executive Committee voted the delay at its meeting Sept. 17-19 because projected income for the 1983-84 budget year—while largest ever—is expected to be between five and six million dollars short of projections (\$114.5 million for basic operating expenses of a \$125 million total which includes capital needs and the challenge portion of the budget).

That means the national mission and education agencies of the 14.1-million member denomination not only face a shortfall in their allocations from the operating budget but no money will be available for capital needs expenditures.

Messengers at the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention last June approved a Cooperative Program budget for 1984-85 of \$130 million, including \$118 million for the operating budget. The Executive Committee has the authority to adjust the budget but felt it was wiser to adjust the budget process in the capital needs area and in 1985-86 rather than tamper with what had been approved by messengers from across the country.

"We need to stress the fact the national Cooperative Program is receiving more money than ever before and the growth in terms of real dollars has been outstanding," John Sullivan, pastor of Broadmoor Baptist Church in Shreveport, La., and a member of the program and budget subcommittee of the SBC executive committee said.

Income is below projections, at least in part, because the budget assumed an inflation rate of eight percent when it is now around two percent, according to Reginald McDonough, associate executive secretary and director of program planning for the Executive Committee. Also, he said, the Cooperative Program budget tends to run 18 months behind the national economy so the upturn has not found its way to CP receipts yet.

"The ship is not about to sink," McDonough said. "The Cooperative Program receipts are continuing to increase. We have had four straight years of significant increases in real dollars (excluding inflation)."

The six seminaries, the two mission boards and the eleven other national agencies and commissions which receive Cooperative Program funds have adjusted for the 1983-84 shortfall and many indicated their requests for 1985-86 will be tempered by knowledge of "budget realities."

Narrowing the gap between available funds and capital needs, the "brick and mortar" projects, of the agencies may be more complicated. Already approved by messengers to the annual meetings are capital expenditures of \$3,340,385 for the fiscal year ending this month and \$6,874,000 in the 1984-85 budget. For the three budget years, 1985-88 the combined capital needs have been set at \$25,866,000.

The SBC constitution provides that unfunded capital needs be carried over and included in the capital needs portion of the next year's budget. One option under consideration would move all capital needs forward one year which would allow the "re-aligned" budget to begin funding them with a goal of fully funding all capital needs by 1989.

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Jimmy Allen, president of the SEC Radio-Television Commission in Fort Worth, Texas, and head of the Inter-Agency Council (a planning group from all the agencies) stressed the importance of "letting the people know the Cooperative Program budgets will always give priority to the programs of missions, education and evangelism—we will not sacrifice our basic programs for people for any piece of brick and mortar—ever."

The program and budget subcommittee will meet again Jan. 23-25. At that time the agencies will make their final budget requests for 1985-86 and committee members will make the tough decisions on how to match realities with needs.

The budget will be presented to the full Executive Committee in February and to the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Dallas the following June.

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Committee Okays
Study Of Article

By Dan Martin

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—A study of two controversial news articles has been approved by the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Without comment, the 68-member committee approved at its September meeting, a report by the public relations workgroup that it "is considering the matter of the Baptist Press news stories...and other related matters." One member, John Lewis of Raleigh, N.C., voted against the recommendation.

In addition to dealing with controversy, the committee also heard SEC President Charles Stanley of Atlanta encourage them to be reconciled and to learn how to love one another.

The news articles, released through the denomination's news service Sept. 17 and 18, concern allegations H. Paul Pressler, a Houston appeals court judge and newly elected member of the Executive Committee, allegedly tape recorded an hour-long conversation Sept. 1 with J. Stafford Durham, 28, a student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and former driver for seminary president Roy Lee Honeycutt.

The student, also pastor of Long Lick Baptist Church in Stamping Ground, Ky., filed a formal complaint with the Federal Communications Commission alleging Pressler recorded the conversation "without my knowledge, without prior consent and without a beeper to indicate a recorder was in use."

Later, Durham said, portions of the conversation appeared in a news article in the Houston Chronicle newspaper. Durham claimed his "civil rights have been violated because information that was obtained illegally" was used as a basis for the article.

The first story, released Sept. 17, was based on a notarized letter Durham mailed Sept. 14 to the FCC in Washington. The second story, released Sept. 18, was based on a hand-written statement provided by Pressler to Baptist Press, in which the Houston jurist said: "No honest person should object to a record being kept of what he says."

Both stories specified no criminal violation apparently is involved, and that the complaint is based on a tariff agreement with American Telephone and Telegraph Co., concerning tape recordings of telephone conversations by one party to that conversation.

In the second story, Pressler said: "Recent experiences have caused me to (be) most careful in communications with certain people to make sure that the content of our conversations will not be misrepresented."

The incident is part of an escalating "holy war" in the 14.2 million member denomination over doctrine, theology and denominational politics. Pressler is a leader of the inerrancy movement, designed to capture control of the denominational agencies in order to turn them to a more conservative stance.

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The action adopted by the Executive Committee did not specify when the group will meet again to consider the matter. Although the matter drew no comment when it was adopted, it had been alluded to in each of the three plenary sessions by different members of the committee.

Allen Sears, an assistant U.S. attorney in Louisville, Ky., said "there appears to be no federal criminal violation in the taping. The only possible violation which can be found is a possible violation of the tariff agreement."

Sears, who came on the committee in 1983, stressed he was not offering a legal opinion, but said the most drastic sanction could be removal of telephone privileges, but that the "normal sanction is a letter," requesting that taping cease.

John McCall, an attorney from Louisville, said the "surreptitious surveillance of agency executives, the surreptitious one-party recording of telephone conversations of seminary students are among the kinds of issues that are divisive in this convention."

John Sullivan, pastor of Broadmoor Baptist Church in Shreveport, La., and past two-term first vice-president of the SEC, said: "Between now and February when we have our meeting to seek to clear up this public relations matter, we need to keep our rhetoric to a minimum and our accusations to ourselves.

"Please be careful that the feeding of our egos does not overcome the need for respecting each other and the vital work of this committee. We do not need a new battleground for differences. We need a clearing house for differing ideas."

At the close of the first session, Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Church of Atlanta, who won a first ballot victory to become president of the convention during the June annual meeting, called participants to their knees to pray that God would "make right what is not right" within the troubled convention.

The president spent most of his 30-minute address exhorting the leaders to love one another. He also said he "never wanted to be president" of the SEC, and that he is president "not by coalition, not by choice...but because God has put me here for his own purpose."

Stanley told the committee members he "has perfect love for every one of them," and told of learning to let "God...flow his love through me...(He) showed me I could love people who don't love me. If God has forgiven me and he has forgiven others, how do I have the right to hold anything against them if they have been forgiven, too?"

He said "things are not right" in the nation's largest Protestant denomination, but asserted "God intends it to be right. I believe God wants to heal our differences and our hurts and the things that keep us from being all that he intends us to be."

He said: "If we will humble ourselves before God and one another, and be willing to do whatever it costs to make it right, then he will make it right." As he called for prayer, he encouraged committee members to "love and forgive" and to "ask God to show us how to put right that which is not right."

He also told the assembled Baptist leaders he "believes all of us are saints (converted) and are forgiven (by God.) We are all going to have to spend eternity together."

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BTC-N

Americans United, Others
File Suit In Vatican Case

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WASHINGTON (BP)—Calling U.S. diplomatic relations with the Vatican "unfair, imprudent and illegal," more than 15 religious bodies headed by Americans United for Separation of Church and State filed suit in federal district court challenging President Reagan's appointment of William A. Wilson as ambassador to the Holy See.

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Besides the organizations, which range from the National Council of Churches to the National Association of Evangelicals, 77 individuals joined in filing the suit. Several of those listed in the lawsuit are Southern Baptists.

Conspicuously absent, however, is the Southern Baptist Convention itself, which is still studying the matter before deciding whether to participate (see separate story).

Named as defendants in the suit are Reagan, Secretary of State George P. Shultz, Secretary of the Treasury Donald T. Regan and Wilson.

At a Washington news conference announcing the suit had been filed minutes earlier on Sept. 19 in the U.S. District Court for Eastern Pennsylvania, Americans United Executive Director Robert L. Maddox said the legal avenue was taken because parties objecting to diplomatic relations with the Vatican had "encountered deaf ears and closed minds on this issue in the White House and in the United States Senate."

A 117-year ban on formal recognition of the Vatican was lifted last fall by the Senate on a voice vote after practically no debate, action Maddox described as "robbing the nation of sufficient time to consider the merits" of an exchange of ambassadors.

Then, on Jan. 10, 1984, President Reagan announced formal recognition of the Vatican and sent the name of William A. Wilson, a long-time personal friend and advisor, to the Senate for confirmation as the first ambassador under the new arrangement. The Senate confirmed the appointment March 7 by a vote of 81-13.

Maddox presented a litany of objections to the new U.S.-Vatican relations, saying, "It is not right for one faith group to have a special and unique relationship with the U.S. Government, with formal, continuing access to the President of the United States and other highly placed officials in a way that no other religious body enjoys.

"It is not right for the spiritual and moral teachings and beliefs of one church operating in the political arena to receive greater government respect than the deeply held beliefs of all other religious groups."

Maddox said further that appointment of an ambassador to the Vatican violates the First Amendment ban on an establishment of religion, the Fifth Amendment's equal protection clause and "invites unhealthy divisions along religious lines."

Southern Baptist plaintiffs include W.L. Lumpkin, president of the Baptist General Association of Virginia and pastor of Freemason Street Baptist Church, Norfolk, Va.; Robert D. Hughes, executive director-treasurer of the Southern Baptist General Convention of California; Robert A. Parker, director of the Christian Life Council, Arkansas Baptist State Convention; Alton H. McEachern, pastor of First Baptist Church, Greensboro, N.C.; James A. Langley, executive director of the District of Columbia Baptist Convention.

Also, Charles H. Ashcraft, retired executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention; Rudy A. Pulido, pastor of Southwest Baptist Church, St. Louis; C. Welton Gaddy, chaplain at Mercer University, Macon, Ga.; Ira H. Peak Jr., director of Christian moral concerns, Missouri Baptist Convention; James Leo Garrett, professor of theology, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary; Paul Griffin Jones II, executive director-treasurer of the Christian Action Commission, Mississippi Baptist Convention; Leon Hyatt Jr., church extension director, Louisiana Baptist Convention, and Phil D. Strickland, director of the Christian Life Commission, Baptist General Convention of Texas.

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SEC Executive Committee Delays
Decision To Join Vatican Suit

By Stan Haste

Baptist Press
9/20/84

WASHINGTON (BP)—Despite a strongly worded resolution adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in Kansas City, Mo., and a separate motion urging legal action, the SEC Executive Committee has voted to delay joining a lawsuit challenging U.S. diplomatic relations with the Vatican.

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In a routine action taken Sept. 18, the Executive Committee accepted without debate a recommendation from its administrative and convention arrangements subcommittee that a decision on joining a lawsuit filed Sept. 19 by Americans United for Separation of Church and State and other religious groups be deferred until the February Executive Committee meeting.

Although plaintiffs in lawsuits are under no obligation to join at the time of filing, the five-month delay between Executive Committee meetings could mean the case will have been argued in the U.S. District Court for Eastern Pennsylvania before the Executive Committee acts.

The recommendation to take no action at present came to the administrative subcommittee from the by-laws workgroup. According to observers present at the workgroup meeting, discussion over deferring action in the matter centered on avoiding the appearance of opposing President Reagan during his reelection campaign.

Members of the workgroup are John Sullivan, pastor of Broadmoor Baptist Church, Shreveport, La.; Darrell Robinson, pastor of Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile, Ala.; Frank Lady, an attorney from Jonesboro, Ark.; David C. Maddox, a layman from Fullerton, Calif.; Paul Pressler, an appeals court judge from Houston, and John T. Tippet Jr., a retired pastor from Savannah, Ga. Ex-officio members of the workgroup are Frank Ingraham, a Nashville, Tenn., attorney who is chairman of the administrative and convention arrangements subcommittee, and W. Dewey Presley, chairman of the Executive Committee.

Southern Baptist participation in the suit against President Reagan, Secretary of State George P. Shultz, Secretary of the Treasury Donald T. Regan and U.S. ambassador to the Vatican William A. Wilson had been sought by Americans United because the SEC, the nation's largest non-Catholic denomination, is seen as important to the suit's success.

The Kansas City motion requested the Executive Committee "to see that this Convention's position against a U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See...comes properly before any court adjudicating a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality thereof, in whatever manner legal counsel recommends most effective to serve Southern Baptists' interest, it being understood that the Executive Committee may work in concert with other interested parties."

In addition, messengers to the Kansas City convention adopted a resolution protesting U.S.-Vatican relations and pledging "support of actions which challenge diplomatic relations with the Holy See."

Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary church history professor G. Hugh Wamble, author of both the motion and the resolution, told Baptist Press he was "dissappointed that the Executive Committee decided to do nothing about opposing the embassy in the Vatican in the only forum now open to us, the federal judiciary."

Wamble, a former president of the Missouri Baptist Convention and long-time advocate of strict separation of church and state, also said, "I can conceive of only one basis on which anyone could object to Southern Baptist participation in the suit and that is that the suit names Ronald W. Reagan, president of the United States of America, as party-plaintiff."

Noting that under the Constitution, the president "has authority to conduct foreign policy," Wamble declared: "I cannot conceive of filing any suit that would not name the president as a party-plaintiff, regardless of who he is."

"Ronald Reagan is the one who initiated the embassy to the Holy See. He nominated the ambassador. I can conceive that some Southern Baptists would have a partisan political interest in avoiding naming President Reagan in a suit. However, I hope that Southern Baptists are unwilling to sacrifice our principles respecting the First Amendment on any political altars, regardless of whose altars these may be."