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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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87-25

Bylaw Change To Shuffle  
SBC Membership On BJCPA

N-LO  
By Dan Martin

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—A change aimed at increasing "grassroots" Southern Baptist participation in the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs was approved during the February meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee.

The change, a revision of SBC Bylaw 18, was recommended by a nine-member special committee studying the relationship between the SBC and the BJCPA, a religious liberty watchdog organization composed of nine Baptist bodies in the United States and Canada.

The committee was appointed in September to study a motion made during the 1986 annual meeting of the SBC to withdraw from the BJCPA and establish "an exclusive Southern Baptist presence" in the nation's capitol.

Although the Executive Committee adopted the bylaw revision, study committee Chairman Gary F. Young cautioned Southern Baptists to avoid drawing "unintended implications" from the action.

"I have been asked if this means we have decided against defunding or dismantling (of the BJCPA)," Young told Baptist Press, adding he believes the change in the bylaw is needed whether the final recommendation is to continue the relationship, withdraw from BJCPA or continue in a modified relationship.

The change in Bylaw 18 must be approved by messengers to the 1987 annual meeting of the SBC in order to become part of the SBC Constitution.

The change would revise membership on the SBC's Public Affairs Committee, which relates to the BJCPA. Currently, the PAC is composed of 15 members, seven of whom are permanent members by virtue of office. Included are the chief executive officers of the Executive Committee, Foreign Mission Board, Home Mission Board, Sunday School Board, Christian Life Commission, Brotherhood Commission and Woman's Missionary Union. Two other agency executives also serve rotating terms.

The president of the SBC also serves as a board member. Five of the 15 members are "at-large" positions and may serve only one four-year term.

All of the members of the SBC's Public Affairs Committee are members of the board of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

During the October meeting of the Baptist Joint Committee, a plan revising the way the nine Baptist bodies are represented was approved. The plan creates a 54-member board for BJCPA, but specifies none of the member denominations may have more than one-third of the membership.

Under the BJCPA revision, the SBC would be entitled to 18 representatives, the only body entitled to the maximum number allowed.

The change in the bylaw, which would become effective immediately if adopted by messengers at the 1987 annual meeting, limits the number of agency executives serving by virtue of office to five: the chief executives of the Executive Committee, Sunday School Board, Annuity Board, Home Mission Board and Foreign Mission Board. The SBC president also retains a seat on the committee.

The revision specifies there will be 12 at-large members who may serve two four-year terms. Those members, the new bylaw specifies, "shall be selected as far as possible on a basis that will provide representation from the various geographic areas of the United States."

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A new category of membership, "ex-officio, non-voting," is created in the bylaw. The chief executive officer of the Christian Life Commission, who currently is a voting member of the PAC and BJCPA, will become an "ex-officio, non-voting" member of the group, if the bylaw is adopted in St. Louis.

Another change in the bylaw relates to the functioning of the Public Affairs Committee.

The bylaw says: "The 18 voting members of the committee shall also be the representatives of the Southern Baptist Convention who serve on the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. The committee shall work with the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, but shall also function as a separate committee serving the Southern Baptist Convention."

Traditionally, the SBC's Public Affairs Committee has not met as a separate committee and has had as its primary function being the conduit through which money and membership flowed from the SBC to the BJCPA.

The revision in the bylaw came out of two meetings of the study committee, during which, according to Chairman Young, the members "brainstormed" ways to "give Southern Baptists the most effective and efficient representation in Washington." The group also is studying the "size and constituency" of the BJCPA as part of its instructions from the Executive Committee.

Young said the proposed revision of Bylaw 18 was presented by Frank Lady, an attorney from Jonesboro, Ark., during a study committee session in advance of the full Executive Committee meeting. After discussion, Young said, Lady "reworked the proposal and brought it back."

"I was pleasantly surprised we got the matter worked out as fast as we did," Young said, adding the study committee "pursued the matter because of the timing. We knew if we could get the proposal before the Executive Committee this time (in February) and it was adopted, messengers could consider it in St. Louis.

"If we had waited," he added, "the messengers could not have considered the change until the 1988 convention. This way, it can become effective immediately after it is adopted rather than having to wait another year."

One change committee members made to Lady's original proposal was to place the chief executive of the Sunday School Board on the PAC, replacing Lady's original suggestion of the chief of the Christian Life Commission.

"Several people asked if removing the CLC could be interpreted as censuring them because of the way in which the incoming executive was elected," Young said. (In January, members of the CLC board of directors elected Larry N. Baker of Kansas City, Mo., as executive director by a 16-13 vote, setting off a controversy across the denomination.)

Young said the action to place the Sunday School Board president on the board and the creation of a separate category for the CLC executive "absolutely is not" a censure. "The reason we did it that way is that the CLC is likely to have an office in Washington itself," he said.

One of the proposals being considered by the study committee is a recommendation the CLC receive allocation of additional funds to establish an office in Washington to deal with moral and social issues. Currently, the BJCPA deals only with religious liberty and separation of church and state issues.

Young said the study committee will meet again in Nashville, Tenn., March 27-28 to continue work on devising a plan to resolve the problem of the relationship between the SBC and the BJCPA.

"Right now we are in the process of continuing to brainstorm by mail and by telephone. Under the rules of brainstorming, we are receiving suggestions about things which may be live options and solutions, but are making no evaluation of them," Young said. "We are looking at them not as good and bad but as effective and ineffective, workable and less workable.

"In March we will begin to formulate our decisions and will begin to take votes. Up to this point we haven't taken any votes as to where we are going."

Young added he anticipates being able to release a final report of the committee's recommendations as soon as the decisions are made: "We are not trying to keep anything a secret, and we want to give people time to think about our recommendation, pray about it and even to make suggestions.

"It is our hope that we can successfully come up with a plan most Southern Baptists can support," he added.

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Cooperative Program Tops  
\$13 Million For 1st Time

By Marv Knox

N-60  
Baptist Press  
2/24/87

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Southern Baptists launched 1987 with record-breaking contributions to their convention-wide Cooperative Program budget.

Cooperative Program contributions — passed along to national and international evangelistic, missionary and educational endeavors from 37 state Baptist conventions — totalled \$13,078,303 in January, reported Harold C. Bennett, president and treasurer of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee.

The previous single-month record was set in January 1986, when the program took in almost \$12.8 million. Only three monthly totals have surpassed \$11 million.

This year's strong January showing brought annual Cooperative Program receipts to almost \$44.1 million, four months into the fiscal year, Bennett reported. That total is 5.26 percent ahead of receipts for the same period during the 1985-86 fiscal year.

Despite economic hardships in petroleum-producing and agricultural states, Southern Baptists are taking strides to increase their support for the unified budget. This year, 25 state conventions increased the percentage of their overall budgets dedicated to the convention-wide Cooperative Program, said James Powell, executive vice president for Cooperative Program promotion at the Southern Baptist Stewardship Commission.

In light of that commitment, Bennett predicted Southern Baptists will increase Cooperative Program receipts from 5 percent to 6 percent over the previous budget. An increase on that level would push total receipts to between \$130.4 million and \$131.7 million. Such a total would surpass the Cooperative Program's first-phase basic operating budget of \$126.6 million but would not completely meet the program's \$5.9 million capital needs budget.

The situation leaves budget managers with mixed emotions. "We're delighted for the gains," explained Tim A. Hedquist, Executive Committee vice president for business and finance. "I keep being amazed at the faithfulness of people who are struggling -- particularly with the farm and oil crises. Even these strong Cooperative Program figures do not always reflect the faithfulness which makes them possible.

"At the same time, we cannot forget the overwhelming need," he added. "Even if every phase of the budget were met, needs would remain."

Reflecting on the January receipts, Hedquist noted the percentage increase over January 1985 would have been greater had several of the largest state Baptist conventions not changed their methods of channeling Cooperative Program funds on to the Executive Committee.

Rather than estimating their receipts and writing 12 equal monthly Cooperative Program checks, these states have begun sending bimonthly checks based upon actual receipts. The end result is that receipts for the second half of each month are not tabulated until the next month, and the "lost" tabulation for the second half of January will not be regained until a full-year cycle has been completed.

Despite the bookkeeping change, the new process for handling Cooperative Program funds is beneficial, Hedquist said: "These states have gone from dividing an estimate of their budgets to a straight division of their budgets. This is very positive; states are not holding money, nor are they paying out of funds they do not have. This is more in keeping with the cooperative system, and it is better for the states and national agencies."

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Parents To Act Early  
For SBC Child Care

N-CO

ST. LOUIS (BP)--Parents who plan to take their preschool children to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting June 16-18 in St. Louis have been encouraged to act soon if they want to use convention-sponsored child care.

"It is time now to preregister preschool children for SBC child care," announced Convention Manager Tim A. Hedquist. For convention purposes, preschoolers are defined as children who have not yet started first grade.

Space in Cervantes Convention Center will limit childcare registration, Hedquist said, noting overflow areas primarily will be used to seat 30,000 SBC messengers in the facility.

But unlike the 1986 convention in Atlanta, preschool children will be allowed on the convention floor when accompanied by their parents, he reported.

Older children in grades 1-6 will not be allowed on the floor unless they are registered messengers, he added. Day care will be provided for these children by the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, and preregistration is not necessary.

Preschool child care will be provided for all seven business sessions of the annual meeting — three Tuesday, June 16; two Wednesday, June 17; and two Thursday, June 18, said Child Care Director Lucille Shrimpton. Cost will be \$5 per child per session, not to exceed \$25 for all seven sessions.

Preschool facilities will open 30 minutes prior to each session, Shrimpton said. Parents will be required to pick up their children after each session, even those interrupted only by mealtimes. Although snacks will be provided during sessions, meals for children will not be available.

The childcare operation will be staffed by volunteers from area churches, and directors will be convention-approved preschool workers from the Illinois and Missouri Southern Baptist state conventions, she reported.

The children will be divided into three age categories: bed babies and toddlers, 2s and 3s, and 4s and 5s, she said. The operation will be staffed with one worker for every three babies and one worker for every four of the older preschoolers.

Preregistration packets are available by writing: SBC Preschool Child Care, c/o Fee Fee Baptist Church, 11330 St. Charles Rock Rd., Bridgetown, Mo. 63044.

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Ministry To Aging Group  
Holds Annual Meeting

N-Texas

Baptist Press  
2/24/87

DALLAS (BP)--Approximately 80 persons representing 16 states attended the annual national meeting of the Southern Baptist Association of Ministries with the Aging (SBAMA) at North Texas State University in Denton, Feb. 16-18.

Featured speakers included Bill Blackburn, pastor of Trinity Baptist Church in Kerrville, Texas; David Oliver, director of the gerontology program at St. Paul School of Theology in Kansas City, Kan.; and Darrel Watkins, professor of social work, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Officers elected were: Roger Hauser of Savannah, Ga., president; Mary Gillerstedt of Atlanta, first vice-president; Ross Parrott of Phoenix, Ariz., second vice-president; Jimmy Dusek of Orlando, Fla., vice-president for church and denomination; Lucian Coleman of Fort Worth, Texas, vice-president for educational institutions; Hoyle Jackson of Asheville, N.C., vice-president for long-term care; and B.J. Dier, Jr., Santa Rosa Beach, Fla., secretary-treasurer.

The 1988 SBAMA meeting is scheduled for Feb. 14-16 in Phoenix, Ariz.

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N-Texas

Former Texas WMU  
President Dies

GREGORY, Texas (BP)-- Inez Hunt, former president of Texas Woman's Missionary Union, died Feb. 19 in Gregory, Texas. Memorial services were held Feb. 21 at First Baptist Church in Gregory.

Mrs. Hunt, 76, served as Texas WMU president from 1968 to 1972. She represented Texas on the Southern Baptist Stewardship Commission in 1976-1980 and served three terms on the board of trustees of Valley Baptist Academy in Harlingen, Texas. She was the author of Century One: A Pilgrimage of Faith, the centennial history of the Texas WMU, and was well-known as a book reviewer and speaker.

Mrs. Hunt was preceded in death by her husband, H.C., in 1967 and by one sister. She is survived by four brothers and four sisters.