



**BAPTIST PRESS**  
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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91-165

Missouri Baptist Convention  
elects officers, approves budget

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. (BP)--The Missouri Baptist Convention elected a "clearly conservative" president and approved a flat 1992 budget of \$15.2 million during its annual meeting Oct. 28-30 in Springfield.

Convention delegates, called messengers, elected Gerald Davidson president of the convention, which has more than 600,000 members in about 1,900 churches and missions. He defeated Tom Nelson, retired convention employee of Jefferson City, 888 votes to 743.

Davidson, pastor of First Baptist Church in Arnold, said he regards himself as a theological conservative, and noted he is "probably the first" MBC presidential candidate in recent years who is "clearly perceived as a conservative.

"I am unapologetically an inerrantist, a conservative," he said.

There has been an ongoing division within the Southern Baptist denomination between theological conservatives and moderates for the last 10 years.

Davidson said he believes "there isn't as great a distance between many of the folks in our convention as a lot of people would believe. I think that probably we (the convention) have been perceived to be more polarized and divided than we really are."

He added, "I think there is a theological difference, but the division is not nearly as great as it appears."

Other convention officers elected were Rodney Travis, pastor, First Baptist Church, Jackson, first vice president; T.O. Spicer, director of missions, Spring River Baptist Association, Joplin, second vice president; and Evelyn Gustafson, director of business and communication, Greene County Baptist Association, Springfield, recording secretary.

Messengers also approved a 1992 \$15.2 million Cooperative Program budget recommended by the state executive board. The Cooperative Program is the unified financial plan used by the Missouri and Southern Baptist conventions.

The budget remains virtually unchanged from 1991. Of the total, 64.25 percent will be used for state convention causes, and 35.75 percent will be channeled to the Southern Baptist Convention. This is the same division of funds as in the 1991 budget.

Proposed budgets were approved after amendments were adopted defunding two religious freedom watch groups.

A \$15,000 allocation in the Cooperative Program to the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs was removed by 890-700 vote.

A \$3,000 allocation in the state missions offering budget for Americans United for Separation of Church and State was diverted to starting new church works. Americans United is an interdenominational religious liberty organization based in Washington.

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In other convention business, messengers voted 686-481 against a proposed amendment to the constitution which would allow Missouri Baptist churches to affiliate with more than one Baptist denomination.

Proponents of the constitutional revision cited the need to work with ethnic congregations which might want to affiliate with the Missouri Baptist Convention and conventions traditionally identified with their ethnic group.

Opponents expressed concern that the doctrinal integrity of the Missouri Baptist Convention might be compromised.

Messengers also approved resolutions expressing gratitude to convention planners and local businesses for convention preparation and administration; sustaining Missouri Baptist commitment to opposing pornography; supporting "sufficient and quality" health care to all persons; and affirming and encouraged Baptist bivocational ministers and programs and churches supporting bivocational ministers.

A record 3,531 persons registered for the convention, including a record 2,030 messengers.

The 1992 MBC annual meeting will be Oct. 26-28 in Cape Girardeau.

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Criswell College reportedly  
fires Patterson as president

Baptist Press  
11/1/91

DALLAS (BP)--Paige Patterson, one of the chief architects of the conservative movement in the Southern Baptist Convention, allegedly has been dismissed as president of Criswell College in Dallas.

The Dallas Morning News reported the school's dean of students, Danny Adkins, announced the dismissal to the student body Oct. 31, saying it was part of an across-the-board administrative shakeup. He said the Criswell College board of trustees met in executive session on Oct. 28 and voted to dismiss all of the school's administrators, including Patterson.

According to the Dallas Times Herald, after the announcement Thursday morning, Patterson received a vote of confidence from 134 of the school's 335 students who said Patterson's dismissal would "affect their enrollment" at Criswell College. Of the 175 who participated in the vote, 22 said they would not be affected, and 19 were undecided.

The newspaper cited sources as saying the dismissal -- which had been rumored for several months -- came as the climax to a long-standing feud between Patterson, high-level administrators and members of the school's board of trustees.

The Dallas Morning News credited officials knowledgeable about Criswell College as saying Patterson's dismissal came as the result of his spending too much time and energy on denominational politics, to the detriment of the school.

Trustees promised to say nothing about the administrative change until Patterson had an opportunity to announce his plans on Nov. 4, the Morning News reported. The newspaper quoted Adkins as saying he was told by a trustee Patterson was "negotiating" his future at the college.

Patterson, 49, was said to be out of town and unavailable for comment.

Criswell College was founded in 1970 as the Criswell Bible Institute. Patterson was elected president of the school in 1975, succeeding H. Leo Eddleman.

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Annuity Board votes raise  
for 16,028 Plan A retirees

By Thomas E. Miller Jr.

DALLAS (BP)--Annuity Board trustees voted an increase in benefits for more than 16,000 annuitants, heard reports of investment success and adopted a 1992 budget in their fall meeting in Dallas, Oct. 28-29.

The 16,028 retirees who participated in a defined benefit plan known as Plan A will see a permanent 10 percent increase in their checks at the end of January 1992.

Another 24,991 participants in the plan who still are employed will receive the same formula increase when they retire.

Paul W. Powell, president of the board, said, "It is exciting to pass on our good earnings experience to the people who need it. Even more exciting is to realize the increase on Jan. 1 will make the benefits more than 210 percent of what the original formula promised."

Harold D. Richardson, treasurer, reported strong growth in contributions and earnings during the third quarter that brought total assets to almost \$3.35 billion on Sept. 30. Assets of the board have grown at a rate of \$1.25 million a day in the first nine months of the year.

Richardson noted a 17 percent growth -- almost a half billion dollars -- in the last 12 months, with \$346 million of the growth since Jan. 1.

Retirement plan members contributed \$141 million in nine months, an increase of 5.7 percent over the same period in 1990.

"Benefits paid in nine months totalled almost \$79 million, which will probably mean \$100 million in benefits paid by Dec. 31," said Richardson.

John R. Jones, senior vice president, investments, reported the Annuity Board's four investment funds ... "performed extremely well during the third quarter, both in absolute terms and relative to established benchmarks."

All four funds posted positive earnings. Leading the quarterly earnings record was the variable fund of common stocks with 6.78 percent. The fund was up 16.3 percent for nine months, and 31 percent since Sept. 30, 1990.

The balanced fund (stocks and bonds) earned 6.25 percent in the quarter, up 13.7 percent for nine months, and 24 percent for the past 12 months.

The fixed fund grew to \$1.37 billion and earned enough to stay on target for an estimated 8.8 percent crediting rate for 1991.

The short-term fund earned 1.37 percent in the third quarter and 4.42 for nine months.

Relief funds paid from Southern Baptist Cooperative Program receipts totalled \$172,777 to bring the 1991 relief payments to \$497,140. There were 637 grants made to needy retired ministers or their widows.

The trustee relief committee considered 32 new requests for aid and approved eight for 2-year monthly grants, five for one-time grants, three for 2-year expense grants, one 5-month expense grant, and one 4-month expense grant. Fourteen applications were declined for being outside guidelines.

The relief committee also approved a \$125 Christmas check to monthly and expense grant recipients.

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An "average" relief recipient is 77 years old with total monthly income of \$575 and monthly expenses of \$673.

The board's Adopt An Annuitant ministry received \$87,220 in the third quarter. On Sept. 30, there were 885 annuitants receiving an extra \$50 per month from the ministry.

Joel Mathis, senior vice president, insurance administration, reported on continued progress of the board's church comprehensive medical plan.

A 4.9 percent rate increase for the first six months is the lowest in four years, Mathis said. Another increase is anticipated in July. "If churches will budget 11 percent more money in 1992 than their December rates in 1991, we think they will be safe from having to adjust budgets before the year is over," said Mathis.

It was announced the Annuity Board's property and casualty program is being changed from Aetna Casualty and Surety Company to Preferred Risk Group, a church specialty company that will write Southern Baptist church insurance in all 50 states. A new local recording agent also will open the way for the board to market property and casualty products to association offices, state conventions and some agencies and institutions.

Trustees adopted a 1992 operating budget of \$23,926,722. The budget is an increase of \$1.6 million over 1991. Treasurer Richardson noted controllable costs will rise no more than inflation.

The Annuity Board, which receives no Southern Baptist Cooperative Program funds for operations, is expected to require less than 0.7 percent of assets for operations next year. The operating funds are taken from earnings on investments.

Richardson noted in his budget presentation medical plan rates for employees of the Annuity Board will rise 19 percent in 1992. Employees who must pay for dependent medical coverage could see any merit increase absorbed by the new medical rates.

A working luncheon for trustees included an address by Robert G. Dederick, executive vice president and chief economist for The Northern Trust Company, Chicago. Northern Trust is custodial bank for the Annuity Board.

Dederick, a former United States under secretary of commerce for economic affairs, spoke to trustees about the economic outlook.

The next meeting of trustees will be Feb. 24-25, 1992, in Dallas.

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'Average' SBC church still small  
Uniform Church Letter stats show

By Chip Alford

Baptist Press  
11/1/91

NASHVILLE (BP)--Question: What had 286 resident members, 13 baptisms and a Sunday school enrollment of 219?

Answer: The statistically average Southern Baptist church in 1990.

Based on statistics compiled from the 1990 Uniform Church Letter and listed in the "Southern Baptist Handbook 1991," the average Southern Baptist church continues to be a relatively small congregation.

"While we have experienced a growth in the number of larger churches and megachurches in recent years, we still have about as many small churches as we did 40 years ago," said Jim Lowry, denominational statistics specialist for the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's corporate planning and research department.

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Lowry said 60.1 percent of SBC churches reporting in the 1990 UCL had a total membership of less than 300. Of these, 43 percent were located in rural or small community areas with a population of less than 2,500 people.

Lowry said UCL statistics also show the size of the average Southern Baptist church has remained steady over the last 15 years. Resident membership of the average Southern Baptist church in 1975 was 269. Five years later it had grown to only 277 and in 1990 stood at 286.

Little change also has been recorded in the average number of baptisms and Sunday school enrollment.

In both 1975 and 1980, the SBC average of baptisms per congregation stood at 14. That number decreased to 12 in 1985 before rising to 13 in 1990.

Sunday school enrollment in the average Southern Baptist church was reported at 214 in 1975. That figure dropped to 213 in 1980, rose to 221 in 1985 and dropped to 219 in 1990.

The SBC average for total gifts given by a local congregation, however, has more than tripled in the last 15 years. In 1975, the average for total gifts stood at \$41,376. That amount increased steadily to \$67,105 in 1980, \$102,927 in 1985 and \$126,452 in 1990. While inflation is responsible for most of this increase, Lowry said studies have shown "people give more money today because they have more money to spend. It also takes more money to operate our churches."

Average contributions to the Cooperative Program also have shown a steady increase. That amount rose from \$3,953 in 1975 to \$6,355 in 1980, \$9,264 in 1985 and \$10,792 in 1990. As a percentage of total gifts, however, contributions to CP have declined in recent years.

While the number of churches reporting church debt or new construction has decreased in the last 15 years, inflation has caused an increase in cost per congregation. Of those churches reporting a church debt in 1990, the average amount per congregation stood at \$147,330, up significantly from \$59,363 in 1975, and \$107,038 in 1985.

For those churches reporting new construction, the average cost in 1990 was \$74,188, more than triple the \$19,525 amount reported in 1975 and more than double the \$32,811 amount reported in 1980.

UCL statistics also showed the average Southern Baptist church in 1990 included:

- 99 enrollees/participants in discipleship training;
- 58 in music ministry;
- 46 in Woman's Missionary Union and 31 enrollees/participants in Brotherhood; and
- \$20,078 in missions expenditures.

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(BP) graphic illustration mailed to state Baptist newspapers by SSB bureau of Baptist Press

SSB will produce materials  
to help people find meaning

By Linda Lawson

Baptist Press  
11/1/91

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptist Sunday School Board President James T. Draper Jr. pledged "to do all we can to produce materials to help people in their search for meaning and fulfillment" in life.

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In an Oct. 29 speech to the Downtown Exchange Club in Nashville, Draper listed six societal trends in the United States and outlined ways the board is seeking to meet needs related to the trends. The speech was Draper's first to a Nashville community group since his Aug. 20 inauguration as president of the board.

\* Trends Draper cited, in addition to the search for meaning and fulfillment, were: growing interest in Bible study, aging of America, family crises, the desire of many to integrate religion into their lifestyle and church growth.

As examples of the hunger of people for a spiritual dimension to their lives, Draper cited awakenings in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

"This trend toward religious spiritual awakening means religions potentially will become increasingly diverse in languages and cultures," said Draper. For example, he noted with rapid growth in Korea and African nations, Christianity is becoming a non-Western religion, and Spanish is the language most spoken by Christians.

The board currently publishes material in nine languages and has plans to publish a greater variety of materials in more languages, he said.

Bible study, traditionally conducted on Sunday mornings in Southern Baptist churches, is "not just for Sunday morning anymore and not just at the church," said Draper.

He cited the board's Outreach Bible Study materials many churches use to conduct short-term, evangelistic Bible study groups with youth and adults in non-church settings. He noted some churches are experimenting with innovative ways to reach people for Bible study.

"With nine million people enrolled, Sunday school on Sunday morning will continue to be our primary program for Bible study," said Draper. "At the same time churches must experiment with innovative ways to provide Bible study for people who cannot or will not come to a church at 9:30 on Sunday morning.

"The Sunday School Board is committed to leadership in this critical area," he continued.

Concerning the aging of America, Draper said Southern Baptists and the board have been "at the forefront in ministries with senior adults."

The board's monthly magazine, "Mature Living," begun in 1977, has a circulation of 355,000, and the National Association of Baptist Senior Adults includes almost 65,000 members, he said.

Draper also noted a change in interests of senior adults. Instead of primarily seeking fellowship from their church groups and participation in state and national conferences, seniors increasingly "want to make a contribution toward bettering their world.

"More and more senior adults are volunteering on a short-term basis to serve as missionaries in the United States and in foreign countries," he said.

In the area of family life, Draper cited the opportunities churches have in ministering to Baby Boomers "who stayed away from churches in droves until they began having children.

"The Sunday School Board is committed to giving leadership to providing resources to enrich family life and prevent problems as well as help in dealing with the problems," he said.

He noted the board's family ministry department is pilot testing Christian sex education materials this fall.

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To integrate their faith into their lifestyle, people increasingly are "willing to make a sacrifice" in time and money to study the Bible and Christian disciplines, he said.

And concerning church growth, Draper said while the denomination includes many so-called super churches, the majority of Southern Baptist congregations continues to be small churches.

"We're not so much interested in the numbers at any one location. We're interested in helping people at any location accept Jesus Christ as their Savior," he said.

"We feel we're part of what is happening in Nashville and across America," said Draper. "If we do our job, business leaders will have better employers and employees. We'll work in partnership to make that happen."

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Poor relationships called  
top barrier to church growth

By Linda Lawson

Baptist Press  
11/1/91

NASHVILLE (BP)--More important to church growth than space or prospects or even weekly visitation may be the quality of relationships between pastor, church staff and the membership, two ministers of education agreed.

"Our relationship with the people we lead may be the number one barrier to church growth," Wayne Jones told ministers of education attending a seminar on overcoming barriers to growth. Jones, minister of education at First Baptist Church of Norfolk, Va., spoke with the participants via telephone hookup. The seminar was held Oct. 28-31 at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board and sponsored by the Sunday school division.

"We often know the right things to do to achieve growth, but we have difficulty getting them done because of our relationships with the people," added Jones.

Steve Stege, seminar leader and minister of education at First Baptist Church of Lubbock, Texas, described the role of the minister of education in growing a church as that of a facilitator.

"As ministers of education we think we're supposed to organize and plan. Really, we need to be sharing our vision with the people," Stege said. "Church growth is more caught than taught."

A failure to plan and to share those plans may create problems, said Jones.

"We don't give people enough of a big picture to see where we're trying to go in a year of Sunday school growth," said Jones, author of "Overcoming Barriers to Sunday School Growth" published by Broadman Press.

Making false assumptions about their membership is another common mistake ministers of education make related to growth, said Stege.

"They assume the people want the church to grow, and they assume the people know how to grow a church," said Stege.

Also, Stege said ministers of education often fail to understand change, like grief, is a process. They may try to engineer growth by organizing a new Sunday school class when the people involved are still in the stage of resisting the change. In those circumstances, growth rarely happens.

Jones described three types of ongoing Sunday school leadership training as vital for growth to take place. Event training "provides motivation and excitement," but too often it is the only type of training churches have.

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Potential leader training enables church leaders to continually identify new people to fill Sunday school leadership slots, said Jones. And the most important ongoing training takes place in weekly workers meetings which he described as "Sunday school strategy and planning meetings."

Both Jones and Stege agreed ministers of education need to major on developing effective leadership skills.

"Leadership is not planning programs but creating vision," said Stege, who contrasted leadership and management.

"Management is doing things right. Leadership is doing the right thing," he continued. "A good leader-manager is doing the right things right. Dynamic leadership is doing the right thing at the right time. Effective, dynamic leadership is doing the right thing at the right time with the right motive."

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Christians must overcome fear  
to become 'show and tell believers' By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press  
11/1/91

GARDEN GROVE, Calif. (BP)--Rather than being afraid people are not interested in spiritual issues, Christians in the marketplace must become "show and tell believers," a California pastor said.

The main reason Christians do not share their faith is fear that non-Christians are not interested, said Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Valley Community Church in Mission Viejo, Calif.

However, such fear is not valid, Warren said during the National Marketplace Evangelism Conference in Garden Grove, Calif.

Warren cited a 1990 Gallup poll which showed 84 percent of Americans believe Jesus was God's son. He said other polls show 77 percent of Americans believe the Bible is the Word of God, and 71 percent believe in life after death. As further evidence of the public's interest in spiritual matters, Warren showed copies of "Time," "U.S. News and World Report" and "Life" magazines. The cover story in each publication dealt with issues such as life after death, evil, who was Jesus and the author of the Bible.

"The world is more willing to talk about spiritual matters than the people of God," Warren said.

Non-Christians will become Christians when they hear a call to commitment and see Christ makes a difference, Warren said.

"God wants audio-visual Christians," Warren said. "He wants show and tell believers."

Being a verbal and visual witness in the marketplace requires Christian employees to be concerned about the quality of their work.

"Don't cut corners," Warren said. For example, he said an auto mechanic who shares the four spiritual laws is not being an effective witness if the car he is working on does not run when he is finished.

A positive attitude is another requirement for effective marketplace ministers. Christians should do their work without nagging, complaining and back biting, Warren said. He acknowledged work environments can be negative, and he said Christians must depend on God to keep their attitude in check.

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Third, Warren said Christians must tell their fellow workers about the gospel, he said, adding, a verbal witness must accompany a Christian lifestyle.

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Texas CLC director  
responds to SBC CLC

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press  
11/1/91

DALLAS (BP)--Efforts by the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission to "set the record straight" on that agency's position regarding the church-state "Lemon test" have served only to create further confusion, according to the director of the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission.

As reported in an Oct. 31 Baptist Press article, the executive director and general counsel of the Southern Baptist CLC mailed letters to Texas Baptist pastors seeking to correct alleged "misrepresentations" by the Texas CLC of the national agency's position on the Supreme Court's test for ruling on the First Amendment's establishment clause.

The fall 1991 issue of Therefore, a newsletter published by the Texas CLC, includes a critique of a proposed jettisoning of the three-pronged Lemon test in favor of a more accomodationist "coercion" test for judging establishment cases.

The coercion test as proposed by U.S. Solicitor General Kenneth W. Starr and Justice Anthony Kennedy would, for example, allow government sponsorship of non-sectarian religious services as long as no one was forced to participate.

The newsletter notes the Southern Baptist CLC has filed an amicus brief in the pending Lee v. Weisman Supreme Court case, advocating abolition of the Lemon test in favor of an alternative test. The Therefore article mentions a "version of the alternative test" proposed by the SBC CLC.

"We regret that in a widely distributed letter the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission has interpreted our newsletter mainly in terms of an attack on a position the SBC CLC has taken," said Texas CLC Director Phil Strickland.

"Our newsletter was not a specific attack on the SBC CLC position but, rather, a description of what would happen if the Lemon test were discarded in favor of a coercion test ... With due respect to the SBC CLC, the national debate, as well as our newsletter, is focused on the Kennedy version."

The test as proposed by Kennedy would allow government at federal, state and local levels to sponsor religious practice as long as the practice did not threaten to establish a single national church and participation were not coerced, Strickland said.

"This prospect constitutes not only an erosion of religious liberty, but also a threat to civil order," he said. "The chaos of thousands of religious groups competing for government support is not hard to imagine."

The letter to Texas Baptists, signed by CLC Executive Director Richard Land and General Counsel Michael Whitehead, is critical of the Texas CLC for characterizing the national commission's alternative test as a "coercion test." Strickland maintains that while he does not find the SBC CLC's test as objectionable as Kennedy's, it still is "a form of a coercion test."

Strickland points out the SBC CLC's amicus brief makes repeated reference to coercion, including: "Accommodation without coercion is the goal of religion clauses ... Establishment clause protects religious choice from official coercion ... (and) ... The Lemon test ignores the element of coercion."

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While terming differences between the state and national ethics agencies "regrettable but not surprising in the current milieu of Baptist life," Strickland pointed out the two organizations do not disagree on all church-state issues.

"We agree, for example, that state-sponsored prayers in public schools violate the establishment clause of the First Amendment and the Baptist understanding of religious liberty. We simply disagree that the Lemon test, which requires that the government be neutral toward religion, should be discarded in favor of some form of coercion test, which allows government to promote, endorse and support religion in 'non-coercive' ways," he said.

"The point is that when government is allowed to promote religion, some form of coercion is inevitable."

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EDITORS' NOTE: Strickland expressed concern the Texas CLC was denied an opportunity to present its views in the original Baptist Press article dealing with the so-called "war of words" between the state and national ethics agencies.

"Obviously, we were surprised to learn that a response from the Texas Christian Life Commission was not available when we earlier had been assured by the SBC CLC's communications director that our response could be received as late as noon on Friday (Nov. 1) and still be included in the Baptist Press article," Strickland said. The article was released Thursday afternoon, Oct. 31.