

Designated gifts boost CBF despite drop in church giving_111003

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ATLANTA-As projected, undesignated gifts to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship fell short of budget goals for the 2002-2003 fiscal year, requiring a \$513,000 dip into reserve funds for operations.

However, designated giving pushed total revenue for the CBF to a record \$24.5 million, according to audited figures released by CBF officials.

Total revenue increased 15.1 percent, but contributions from churches fell 2.1 percent.

"We knew this was going to be a down year, the mid-year contribution numbers confirmed it, and we began making modifications and amending our plan early on," said Jim Strawn, the Fellowship's chief financial officer. "Without that fiscally responsible action, the deficit would have been more."

The CBF maintains operating reserves of \$8.3 million, Strawn said.

Designated contributions increased 28 percent from the previous year, fueled by a Lilly Endowment grant for ministerial development and a \$5

million anonymous gift.

The CBF's Global Missions Offering received \$5.3 million, short of the \$6.1 million goal.

The \$5 million gift in April enabled the Fellowship to commission 18 new global missions field personnel at the general assembly in Charlotte, N.C., in June. Without that gift, which designated \$4.2 million for global missions over the next three years, the Fellowship would not have been able to send new field personnel, officials said. The gift also included \$500,000 designated for endowment for the CBF Church Benefits Board, \$250,000 for church starts and \$50,000 for a new, shared database system in the Atlanta Resource Center.

Gifts from churches and individuals in Texas to national CBF totaled \$3.13 million, down slightly from the previous year's total of \$3.14 million. Undesignated gifts from Texas totaled \$1.4 million, while the Global Missions Offering received \$1.32 million from Texas.

The number of churches contributing in Texas rose from 379 in fiscal year 2001-02 to 450 in fiscal year 2002-03. The number of individual contributors also rose from 609 in 2001-02 to 638 in 2002-03.

Nationwide, the number of churches contributing to the CBF increased for the fiscal year, and the number of individuals contributing also increased. More than 1,800 churches and 3,700 individuals made contributions to CBF in fiscal 2002-03, compared to 1,715 churches and 3,128 individuals in fiscal 2001-02.

Church counts are approximate because CBF of Florida began reporting church contributions mid-year and because CBF does not receive the names of churches that contribute through the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. CBF also is a part of giving plans through the Baptist General Convention of Texas and the Baptist General Association of

Virginia. Those two states provide church counts to CBF.

Comparison of CBF giving for past two years			
	2001-02	2002-03	Increase/decrease
Contributing Churches	1,715	1,819	6.1%
Church Contributions	\$13,929,598	\$13,640,915	-2.1%
Contributing Individuals	3,128	3,773	20.6%
Individual Contributions	\$6,104,366	\$7,205,837	18.0%
CBF Ministries (undesignated)	\$8,943,419	\$9,031,800	1.0%
Designated Giving*	\$11,358,291	\$14,522,428	27.9%
Total Contributions	\$20,301,710	\$23,554,228	16.0%
Resources & Earnings	\$1,002,964	\$961,556	-4.1%
Total Revenues	\$21,304,674	\$24,515,784	15.1%

** includes Global Missions Offering and Lilly Foundation grant*

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