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SBC warns of funding crisis coming

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) -The Southern Baptist Convention and its entities will face a financial crisis in the near future unless giving to the denomination increases, according to a report adopted unanimously by the SBC Executive Committee Sept. 23.

Echoing a recent report in the Baptist Standard, the SBC Funding Study Committee noted that percentage giving by church members has decreased gradually over the past 30 years. Additionally, churches are forwarding a smaller percentage of their offerings to the Cooperative Program than they did two decades ago.

Those two factors, combined with a sluggish economy, already have impacted the number of missionaries on the field and the tuition rates at SBC-funded seminaries. But the report says that, barring an increase in giving, the situation will continue deteriorating.

While giving to the SBC's Cooperative Program unified budget has increased, gains barely have kept pace with inflation.

"The Southern Baptist Convention and its entities are facing serious financial challenges as they engage the ministry and mission opportunities in this 21st century," the report states. "It is the opinion of the committee none of the entities are in a financial crisis at present. However, all of them are experiencing trends in their fiscal health that could degenerate into a crisis in very few years."

The report lists seven recommendations intended to reverse the trend. However, it discourages additional special offerings, saying the denomination “will be better served by an aggressive stewardship education emphasis.”

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