

Baptist Briefs

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CBF names disaster-response coordinator. The [Cooperative Baptist Fellowship](#) named Charles Ray, a long-time Little Rock, Ark., resident, the first coordinator for the Fellowship's U.S.-based disaster-response team. He'll begin his new position Jan. 1. The two-year position was created through a partnership between national CBF and CBF of Arkansas, who are jointly funding the position. Other state and regional CBF organizations are funding operational expenses for the position. Based on the disaster-response assets and capabilities of CBF state and regional organizations, Ray will develop a national disaster-response plan for the Fellowship. He also will work with governmental and non-profit agencies to respond quickly to disasters, especially in the formation and dispatch of an initial response team.

N.C. Baptists reject bylaw changes. Messengers to the annual [North Carolina Baptist state convention](#) meeting struck down proposed bylaw changes that would have given convention-related institutions more influence over the appointment of trustees and directors. The proposed amendments, more than a year in the making and supported by convention officials, received just 38 percent of the 2,198 ballots cast in the Nov. 14 meeting. Some observers say the move could trigger an exodus of N.C. Baptist colleges and other convention-related entities, which have sought more control over selection of trustees. Even before the convention, one

institution signaled it will exercise more autonomy over trustee elections. [Wingate University](#) in Wingate, N.C., announced a plan to use an option in convention and university bylaws that allows it to appoint up to 50 percent of its trustees.

More than half in United States see Southern Baptists favorably.

Southern Baptists were viewed favorably by 57 percent of adults interviewed as part of recent research conducted by the [North American Mission Board's Center for Missionary Research](#) through [Zogby International](#). The positive outlook toward Southern Baptists, United Methodists and Roman Catholics was about equal in the survey. Mormons and Muslims received less-favorable ratings—32 percent and 27 percent, respectively. Southern Baptists received unfavorable impressions from 17 percent of the people who responded, and 24 percent said they were unfamiliar with Southern Baptists. Researchers polled 1,210 American adults across the country.

Seminary honors church historian. [Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary](#) has dedicated the [Robert A. Baker](#) Church History Room at its Roberts Library, honoring the memory of the longtime church history professor. The room houses Baker's desk, several photos taken during his tenure at the seminary, his oral memoirs from the Texas Baptist Oral History Consortium and a large collection of books on church history—many of which he wrote. Baker earned two degrees from Southwestern Seminary and a doctorate from Yale University. He joined the church history faculty in 1943, teaching until 1981. Baker died Nov. 15, 1992. The seminary also honored Baker and his wife, Fredona, by giving them the L.R. Scarborough Award, named for the school's second president.

Virginia Baptists increase budget. Virginia Baptists adopted a \$14.2 million budget to fund their ministries in 2007—a \$100,000 increase over this year’s budget goal. Messengers attending the annual meeting of the [Baptist General Association of Virginia](#) in Virginia Beach elected Boyce Brannock, a Staunton, Va., attorney and member of First Baptist Church in nearby Waynesboro, Va., president without opposition. Also elected were Joe Lewis, pastor of Second Baptist Church in Petersburg, Va., as first vice president, and Steve Pollard, pastor of Abingdon (Va.) Baptist Church, as second vice president. Brannock, Lewis and Pollard were endorsed by Virginia Baptists Committed, the state’s powerful network of moderates, whose slate of nominees for office has been unopposed for nearly a decade. This year, for the first time since 1997, a candidate not on the organization’s slate was nominated—Ken Barnes, pastor of Woodland Heights Baptist Church in Chesapeake, Va., who was nominated for first vice president. He lost to Lewis, 275-386 (41 percent to 58 percent).

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Texas Baptist churches, in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and around the world.