

Baptist Briefs

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Arizona Baptists take steps to split gifts 50/50 with SBC. Messengers to the [Arizona Southern Baptist Convention](#)'s Nov. 14-15 annual meeting unanimously adopted a missions funding growth plan to increase the percentage of Cooperative Program gifts forwarded to the SBC for national and international missions and ministries. The eventual goal is to divide undesignated Cooperative Program mission gifts 50/50 with SBC causes. Currently, 75 percent of the undesignated receipts are used in Arizona and 25 percent forwarded to the SBC. Arizona messengers adopted a \$3.4 million Cooperative Program budget and a \$3.8 million state convention operating budget for 2007. Next year's Cooperative Program budget is a 1.8 percent increase over the present budget, and the operating budget is down from \$4 million.

BWA mission advancement director named. Alan Stanford, [Baptist World Alliance](#) regional secretary for North America, has been appointed BWA director of mission advancement. He succeeds Ron Harris, who now works as a consultant with BWA. Stanford is pastor of First Baptist Church Clarendon in Arlington, Va., and previously served the BWA as director of promotion and development.

CBF receives second Lilly grant. The [Cooperative Baptist Fellowship](#) has received a second major grant from the [Lilly Endowment](#) to continue and expand a program designed to help nurture and sustain ministers in local congregations. The Fellowship received a grant of almost \$1 million to support its Initiative for Ministerial Excellence—a plan that includes support for teaching congregations, creation of peer-learning groups and grants for sabbaticals. The \$997,874 gift also will fund a new full-time CBF staff position to administer the program. The grant is the second such gift from Lilly to support the work of the program, which began in 2003. The first three years of the program have resulted in 75 peer-learning groups with more than 500 ministers meeting monthly. The ministerial residency program has placed 10 seminary graduates as interns in teaching congregations and has provided 95 sabbatical grants of \$2,500 apiece.

Florida exec wants teetotaler trustees. Citing embarrassment over having spent more than 30 minutes at the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting [debating](#) whether trustees of SBC entities should be limited to people who abstain from alcohol, John Sullivan, executive director-treasurer of the [Florida Baptist Convention](#), said he intends future action in his state convention on the issue. “We are not going to have people on our boards of trustees that do not believe in total abstinence,” Sullivan told messengers to the Florida convention’s annual meeting.

Sonicflood mission tour ends. [Sonicflood](#), a contemporary Christian band, wrapped up a 57-city missions-focused tour in Hampton, Va. More than 26,000 students and young people attended concerts during the 11-week national tour, which included stops in 23 states and Canada. The band partnered with the Southern Baptist Convention’s [International Mission Board](#) in the concerts, which featured student missions testimonies

and multimedia presentations about missions.

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.