

# **North Carolina WMU decides to leave convention's control**

August 30, 2007

Posted: 8/31/07

## **North Carolina WMU decides to leave convention's control**

CARY, N.C. (ABP)—The Woman's Missionary Union of North Carolina board has voted to remove the missions organization from the North Carolina Baptist Building—and the state convention executive director's attempt to assert authority over its staff.

The dramatic move culminates 16 months of tension between the state WMU and the rightward-shifting Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

Conflict between the missions-promotion group and the North Carolina convention has simmered since April 2006, when the WMU leadership voted to change the term that described its relationship with the convention from "auxiliary" to "cooperative partner."

At that time, it also assumed final authority in its own personnel matters, although it committed to stay aligned with Baptist State Convention personnel policies.

At issue was who could make the final call on potential new hires—a responsibility claimed by the state convention's executive director-treasurer because each state WMU staff member is a convention employee.

However, North Carolina WMU staff positions mainly are funded through a state missions offering WMU members promote.

Several meetings took place between WMU and North Carolina Baptist leaders to resolve the issues.

However, they reached an impasse when neither side would budge from their position on ultimate authority in hiring WMU staff.

North Carolina Baptist Executive Director Milton Hollifield said in a prepared statement he was “grieved” that the longstanding relationship between the state convention and WMU had “moved to this level of consequential uncertainty.”

North Carolina WMU Executive Director Ruby Fulbright insisted Hollifield has taken a more active role in hiring matters.

She said in previous state convention administrations, WMU was wholly responsible for hiring and managing its staff and the North Carolina Baptist executive director merely signed paperwork to enter new WMU employees into the payroll system.

Fundamentalists supportive of recent decades’ rightward shift in the national Southern Baptist Convention solidified their control of the North Carolina convention—long a moderate bastion—in the years just prior to Hollifield’s appointment in 2006.

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Baptist churches, in Texas, the BGCT, the nation and around the world.