

Baptist Briefs: Baptists' gifts to Union top \$3 million

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Total giving from Southern Baptists has topped \$3 million for Union University's recovery from a Feb. 5 tornado that destroyed much of the housing and caused major damage to other academic buildings at the Jackson, Tenn., campus. All told, more than 6,000 donors have contributed about \$13 million to the cause, leaving Union about \$5 million short of its needs.

Caner to lead Truett-McConnell. Emir Caner, founding dean of the College at Southwestern in Fort Worth, was elected president of [Truett-McConnell College](#) Aug. 8. Caner, 37, was raised in a Sunni Muslim family in Ohio and converted to Christianity as a teenager in 1982. Caner, who earned his undergraduate degree at Criswell College, his master's degree at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and his doctorate from the University of Texas at Arlington, will become the youngest president ever to lead Truett-McConnell, a four-year college affiliated with the Georgia Baptist Convention. He begins his new duties Aug. 18. Caner has led the College at Southwestern—the undergraduate program at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary—since 2005.

CBF, Global Women enter partnership. Leaders of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and [Global Women](#) recently agreed to enter a three-year partnership to meet the needs of women around the world. Global Women Executive Director Cindy Dawson noted the agreement marks the first long-term partnership for the nondenominational Birmingham, Ala.-based organization since its inception in 2001. Most Global Women partnerships have been short-term and based around specific projects.

Embattled Nashville pastor to step down. Prominent Southern Baptist pastor Jerry Sutton, 57, is set to retire early from Two Rivers Baptist Church in Nashville, following a year of turmoil. The church approved a retirement package that will give him one month of salary for each of his 22 years as Two Rivers' pastor. Last year, the former Southern Baptist Convention officer came under fire from a vocal group of Two Rivers members. They accused him of misappropriating church funds for personal use. In September 2007, more than 70 members filed a lawsuit alleging Sutton had illegally concealed church records that would prove their charges. Sutton survived an October ouster vote, and a judge dismissed the lawsuit in January. In May, the church voted to remove the plaintiffs from membership "because of the damage done to the witness, reputation and welfare of Two Rivers Baptist Church."

Lilly awards \$1 million grant to CBF. The [Cooperative Baptist Fellowship](#) has been awarded a \$1 million grant by Lilly Endowment Inc. for a new missional leadership initiative it will create during the next three years. The "missional leadership ecosystem," as the grant describes it, will focus on two initiatives—one aimed at youth and college students and the other designed to bring theological educators and pastors together in dialogue.

LifeWay announces cutbacks. LifeWay Christian Resources recently announced it is reducing its workforce by about 5 percent by Sept. 30 and cutting expenses in other parts of its operations. A statement released by the agency blamed the nations' economic downturn for lower-than-projected revenues from sales.