

SBC Executive Committee reduces CP budget

September 23, 2020

NASHVILLE (BP)—Decreased giving during the COVID-19 pandemic led the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee to adopt a Cooperative Program allocation budget that is 5 percent less than the committee projected last February.

During a special called meeting Sept. 22, the Executive Committee adopted a \$186,875,000 Cooperative Program allocation budget for the 2020-21 fiscal year, which begins Oct. 1, after originally proposing a budget of \$197.7 million.

Approval of the budget would have been considered by messengers at the 2020 SBC annual meeting, but its adoption became the SBC Executive Committee's responsibility when the annual meeting was canceled because of the pandemic.

It was the first time in 75 years—since 1945, when the annual meeting was canceled—the Executive Committee had the responsibility.

Amid the economic slowdown resulting from the pandemic, Cooperative Program giving was down 2.92 percent in the third quarter of the current fiscal year, and 1.14 percent below budget as of Aug. 31 for the entire year.

Ronnie Floyd, president and CEO of the Executive Committee, thanked churches for their continued giving.



Ronnie Floyd

“I am highly encouraged by how our churches have stepped up in the middle of a global pandemic,” Floyd said. “The impact of COVID-19 has required us to take a step backward with the Cooperative Program allocation budget. We believe this will be a short-lived necessity and that the faithfulness and generosity of Southern Baptists will allow us to move even further forward in the future.”

The decrease in Cooperative Program allocations will impact all entities equally, based on an established formula that gives 50.41 percent of receipts to the International Mission Board, 22.79 percent to the North American Mission Board, 22.16 percent to theological education (SBC seminaries), 1.65 percent to the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission and 2.99 percent to the Executive Committee and SBC operating budget.

In other budgetary action, the Executive Committee approved an \$8.5 million 2020-21 Executive Committee and SBC operating budget, which includes more than \$279,000 in prorated Paycheck Protection Program funding received in July.

The budgets were the only agenda items requiring a vote during the special called meeting, which was held on virtual platforms rather than in-person because of safety concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Great Commission Baptists

SBC President J.D. Greear referenced Revelation 5:6-14 in elaborating on the 2021 SBC annual meeting theme, “We are Great Commission Baptists,” during his address to the Executive Committee.

Greear said the theme isn’t a name change for the SBC, but simply a use of the descriptor approved by messengers to the 2012 SBC annual meeting as an alternate for churches’ use.



J.D. Greear

“Our convention adopted this language in 2012, recognizing that ultimately what brings us together is not a shared Southern heritage but a commitment to the Great Commission,” Greear said, adding the reasons for adopting the descriptor “are more relevant than ever.”

Greear said the descriptor Great Commission Baptists, based on Matthew 28:19-20, unites Southern Baptists, better represents a mission field and a membership that are increasingly non-Southern, and encourages Southern Baptists to look forward “to 2025,” he said, instead of back to 1845.

“Utilizing ‘Great Commission Baptists’ is simply one more step to make clear we serve a risen Savior who died for all peoples, whose mission is not limited to one people living in one time at one place,” Greear said.

“Our Lord Jesus, as you know, was not a white southerner. If you want to be technical about it, he was a brown-skinned Middle Eastern refugee.

Every week we gather to worship a Savior who died for the whole world, not one part of it, and what we call ourselves ought to make that clear.”

Greear encouraged Southern Baptists to continue fighting sexual abuse within churches, to become personally involved with the “Who’s Your One” evangelistic emphasis, to support the Go2 missions movement, and to work to enhance ethnic diversity among Southern Baptist leaders.

In his report, Floyd welcomed three new Executive Committee senior staff members and cited several priorities, including resetting Vision 2025, a convention-wide initiative designed to reach every person with the gospel in every town, city, state and nation. Vision 2025 originally was unveiled during the Executive Committee’s meeting last February, before the onset of the pandemic.

“Vision 2025 will become a four-year vision with the resetting of numerical goals due to losing a year,” Floyd said. “In 2021 ... we will make a major presentation to the (SBC) annual meeting, and then we will move and encourage them to adopt formally Vision 2025.”

Floyd said other priorities include prioritizing and elevating the Cooperative Program; promoting biblical stewardship, advancing the 2021 SBC annual meeting set for June 15-16 in Nashville, and enhancing communication with the Southern Baptist family.

Floyd promoted the Great Commission, encouraged prayer for America and sacrificial giving, and introduced three new additions to the Executive Committee executive staff: Jeff Pearson, chief financial officer and convention manager; Greg Addison, executive vice president; and Charles Grant, executive director of African American relations and mobilization.