

Messenger guide

to key issues for consideration at BGCT 2000 annual session

Issue/Item

◆ Seminary Study

Committee. This special committee was created last year by BGCT messengers and charged with studying the financial resources, theological positions and philosophies of Southern Baptist and Baptist General Convention of Texas-supported seminaries. Its chairman is Bob Campbell, pastor of Westbury Baptist Church in Houston.

The complete report of the Seminary Study Committee is available for download at the Standard's website: www.baptiststandard.com

Background/Recommendation

◆ **Background:** After six months of intensive research, including on-site visits to the six SBC seminaries and personal meetings in Dallas with representatives of the BGCT schools, the committee issued a 100-page report. In short, the committee reported that it believes the six SBC seminaries no longer are operated or teach in accordance with the beliefs of a majority of Texas Baptists. Specific issues cited by the committee include complete domination of trustee boards by one faction within the SBC, trustee interference in running the seminaries, mistreatment of faculty members, antagonism toward BGCT leadership and direction. The committee particularly focused on requirements now in place at each of the SBC seminaries that faculty must affirm and teach the 2000 version of the Baptist Faith & Message, which includes theology objectionable to many Texas Baptists. The three BGCT schools, on the other hand, were found to be teaching in accordance with the beliefs of a majority of Texas Baptists and were affirmed. ◆ **Recommendations:** The committee will present its recommendations, which already have been affirmed by the BGCT Administrative Committee and Executive Board. The recommendations call for changing distribution of the worldwide portion of Cooperative Program funds given through the BGCT. The \$5.3 million previously given to the six SBC seminaries would be reduced to a maximum of \$1 million. That \$1 million would be given based on the number of Texas students attending each seminary. The committee's rationale is that while they take exception with the direction of the SBC seminaries, members of BGCT churches who choose to attend those schools should be supported in their choice. The committee's recommendations would take the \$4.3 million diverted from the SBC seminaries and give it to Truett Theological Seminary at Baylor University, Logsdon School of Theology at Hardin-Simmons University and Hispanic Baptist Theological School.

Time of vote

The Seminary Study Committee will report at 2:20 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 30.

◆ Mission-sending Agency

Study Committee. This committee was created last year by BGCT messengers and charged with studying the financial resources, theological positions and philosophies of Southern Baptist mission-sending agencies. Its chairman is Jim Denison, pastor of Park Cities Baptist Church in Dallas.

◆ **Background:** The committee has begun its work and has conducted extensive interviews with representatives of the SBC International Mission Board, SBC North American Mission Board and Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. ◆ **Recommendations:** The committee is not expected to make any recommendations at this time, but to continue its work and finalize a report within the next year.

The Mission-sending Agencies Study Committee will present a preliminary report after the 2:20 p.m. Seminary Study Committee report on Monday, Oct. 30.

◆ **Proposed BGCT budget for 2001.** This is the annual budget developed by the BGCT Administrative Committee to fund the statewide ministries of the BGCT.

◆ **Recommendations:** The Administrative Committee has recommended a total Texas Cooperative Program budget of \$47.55 million for 2001, an increase of \$796,339 or 1.7 percent. This vote on this budget does not relate to the proposed changes in funding to the Southern Baptist Convention, which come out of the worldwide portion of the Texas Cooperative Program.

The Administrative Committee will present the BGCT budget proposal during the 2:20 p.m. session Monday, Oct. 30.

◆ Recommendation to redirect

funding to "Texas priorities." This recommendation will come from the BGCT Administrative Committee. It will be a separate recommendation from the proposed BGCT budget recommendation.

◆ **Recommendation:** The Administrative Committee has recommended taking \$1.1 million previously going to the SBC Executive Committee and SBC Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission through the worldwide portion of the Cooperative Program and redirecting it to Texas priorities such as Hispanic church starting, human welfare and the work of the Texas Christian Life Commission. Diverting the money from the two SBC agencies is recommended on the rationale that a majority of Texas Baptists do not agree with the direction or philosophy of either agency.

The Administrative Committee will present the Texas priority funding proposal during the 2:20 p.m. Executive Board report on Monday, Oct. 30.

◆ **Houston Baptist University Study Committee.** This special committee was created by the BGCT Executive Board to study the BGCT's relationship to Houston Baptist University in light of HBU trustee action to create a self-perpetuating board.

◆ **Background:** In May, trustees of Houston Baptist University unilaterally voted to change the school's governing documents to create a self-perpetuating board. Previously, all trustees were elected by the BGCT. This action was taken, HBU leaders said, to protect institutional autonomy. They were concerned that the BGCT would prevent individuals from serving on the HBU board if they are members of churches that do not financially support the BGCT. ◆ **Recommendations:** The study committee recently began its work and is not expected to bring any recommendations at this time.

The Houston Baptist University Study Committee will present an initial report during the 2:20 p.m. Executive Board report on Monday, Oct. 30.

◆ **Committee to Study the Basis of Association Formation.** This special committee was created by the BGCT last year to suggest how the BGCT ought to relate to new non-geographic associations being formed. The committee is chaired by Mark Newton, pastor of Baptist Temple in San Antonio.

◆ **Background:** The committee met six times over the last year and presented its report to the BGCT Administrative Committee and Executive Board in September for information only. That same report will be presented to the BGCT for approval. The report affirms "the right of any group of Baptist churches to form an association," whether it be based upon geography, affinity groupings or ethnicity. It suggests that churches outside Texas desiring to affiliate with the BGCT should seek affiliation with existing associations in Texas. ◆ **Recommendations:** In addition to several general suggestions, the report contains two recommendations: (1) That the BGCT relate to non-geographic associations; and (2) That a pilot project be conducted between the BGCT and Asocacion Bautista Hispana Norte Centro de Texas, a new non-geographic association of Hispanic churches in North Central Texas.

The Committee to Study the Basis of Association Formation will present its report and recommendations during the 2:20 p.m. Executive Board report on Monday, Oct. 30.

◆ **Committee to Study Relations Between BGCT and Churches Aligned with Another State Convention in Texas.** This committee was created by the BGCT last year to suggest how the BGCT ought to relate to churches dually aligned with other state conventions. It is chaired by Darold Morgan, retired president of the SBC Annuity Board.

◆ **Background:** The committee was formed primarily to help the BGCT decide how to relate to churches becoming dually aligned with the new Southern Baptists of Texas Convention. This has ramifications for who may serve on convention boards and committees, what qualifies a church to receive mission assistance and more. ◆ **Recommendations:** The committee recommends that the BGCT "should strive to remain as inclusive as possible" and "serve all churches that cooperate with it." It further recommends that the BGCT allow the full range of services and service opportunities to churches that are committed to the purposes of the BGCT and financially support the BGCT, regardless of whether they are dually aligned or singularly aligned.

The Committee to Study Relations Between the BGCT and Churches Aligned with Another State Convention will present its report and recommendations during the 2:20 p.m. Executive Board report on Monday, Oct. 30.