

# Truthfully Speaking

Ephesians 4:15

The Executive Director and the Treasurer  
of the Baptist General Association of Virginia  
Respond to Frequently Asked Questions  
About the BGAV

2006



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*\* Cooperative Missions is Virginia Baptists’ long-standing commitment to the Cooperative Program.*

[To order additional copies of *Truthfully Speaking*, free of charge, **contact:** Kay McMeniman in Support Services at the Virginia Baptist Mission Board; phones: 800.ALL.BGAV (255.2428) or 804-915-5000, Ext. 1296; email: [kay.mcmeniman@vbmb.org](mailto:kay.mcmeniman@vbmb.org); fax: 804.672.7048; or postal mail: VBMB, P.O. Box 8658, Richmond, VA 23226-0568. *Truthfully Speaking* may also be found on the VBMB’s website at [www.vbmb.org](http://www.vbmb.org). Print copies are free of charge because of generous designated gifts by an anonymous donor to make publication possible.]

*Truthfully Speaking: A Response to Frequently Asked Questions*  
**John Upton**

“Who are Virginia Baptists and what does the BGAV believe?” is a question I’m frequently asked. Simply stated, the BGAV is a family of 1,411 active churches (as of June 19, 2006) that believes in faithfully working together in advancing the Kingdom of God. Since 1823, we have been faithful to that call by keeping our focus on the mission. The mission of sharing the gospel and demonstrating God’s love has been a huge responsibility requiring leadership, talents, and resources from a vast and diverse Baptist family across the Commonwealth. This journey of faithful service has seen many challenges over the years – Civil War, World Wars, The Great Depression, doctrinal controversies – yet the focus of missions always has been more compelling than the worse measures Satan has used to distract us.

This clear vision of Virginia Baptists working together with all our diversity for the cause of Christ, trusting the Holy Spirit and trusting one another, is what has kept us together and on course. Unfortunately, there are challenges today as in the past. Today, many untruths and misrepresentations of the BGAV are circulating. Those who have much to gain for their own agenda often circulate these.

We offer this booklet – *Truthfully Speaking* (now in its fifth printing since 2003) – as a means to address those matters directly. As you read this booklet, made possible by generous gifts of an anonymous donor, may you do two things? **First**, celebrate the good that Virginia Baptists do and believe together. We are a solid Baptist body that has many years of experience in ministry and mission together. We know who we are and what God has called us to be and do. **Second**, use these answers to help others know the heart and values of Virginia. I apologize for the necessity for such a booklet. It is unfathomable to me that anyone would believe many of the falsehoods raised.

We print this in order to give confidence to those who may hear only these untruths and be tempted to believe them. You will also find in this booklet comments made by some who have experienced the attempt to move their church out of the BGAV and the hurt that often is involved in such a struggle. Many Virginia Baptists have already contacted us to tell us how much earlier editions of *Truthfully Speaking*, first printed in late 2003, has helped them. Many orders also have already come from outside of Virginia for this booklet.

Let’s not be distracted any longer. Let’s put our heart and energy into being faithful to our common call as Virginia Baptists!

Yours in Christ,



John V. Upton, Jr., Executive Director  
Virginia Baptist Mission Board  
Baptist General Association of Virginia

## **An Overview:**

### ***Truthfully Speaking...***

Virginia Baptists are not a creedal people because we hold that the Bible is the inspired and authoritative Word of God. The Baptist General Association of Virginia (BGAV) has adopted the following vision, values and ministries statements:

### **Our Vision**

We, the Baptist General Association of Virginia, with the Commonwealth [of Virginia] as our garden and the world as our field, affirm our calling to live in Christ and to serve on mission for Him. To this end we:

- Receive the Holy Scripture as inspired and authoritative;
- Proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ in word and deed;
- Encourage rigorous intellectual inquiry;
- Uphold justice with compassion;
- Respect all persons as inherently equal before God;
- Love the community of faith; and
- Serve redemptively the stranger.

*(Adopted by the Baptist General Association of Virginia in annual session, November 1995.)*

### **Our Values**

The Baptist General Association of Virginia hereby affirms the following values, hammered out in the crucible of our history, in serving our Lord, Jesus Christ:

- Centrality of Christ,
- Authority of Holy Scripture,
- Priesthood of the Believer,
- Soul Competency,
- Religious Liberty,
- Separation of Church and State,
- Autonomy of the Local Church,
- Believer's Baptism,
- Respect for Persons,
- Intellectual Integrity,
- Cooperative Spirit,
- Compassion for Unbelievers,
- Responsiveness to a Changing World.

*(Adopted by the Baptist General Association of Virginia in annual session, November 1995.)*

### **Our Ministries**

In cooperation with churches, associations and other ministry partners, we offer:

- Approximately 50 Home Missionaries in Virginia,
- Partnership Missions at Home and Abroad,
- Evangelism/Stewardship Training and Resources,
- Salary and Annuity Supplements for Ministers,
- Camps and Conferences for Youth,
- Children and Family Services,
- Training for Sunday School – Discipleship, Music, Mission Workers,
- Baptist Student Ministries – Colleges and Schools,
- Continuing Education for Ministers,
- Scholarships for Church Vocation Volunteers,
- Estate Planning – Trust Management,
- Retirement Communities,
- Church Planning Consultation,
- Grants for New Church Starts,
- Baptist News and Information.

# Executive Director John Upton and Treasurer Eddie Stratton Respond to Frequently Asked Questions About the BGAV

- **Why does the BGAV exist, and how many churches are members?**  
The BGAV was organized in 1823, and it exists to “furnish the Baptist churches of Virginia a medium of cooperation for the propagation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and for the advancement of the Redeemer’s Kingdom by all methods in accord with the Word of God.” The BGAV has 1,411 active churches as of June 19, 2006.
- **Is the BGAV “broke financially” as has been reported?**  
**Absolutely not!** The BGAV is sound financially. The BGAV balanced its 2003 budget and began 2004 with a surplus. For the first time in many years the BGAV met its budget goal of \$14,300,000 in 2004 – and exceeded it by almost \$200,000. Churches no longer affiliated with the BGAV have had a financial impact on receipts. However, many BGAV churches have substantially increased their Cooperative Missions giving, which has helped to offset the loss. So have new church starts and the return of at least eight churches to the BGAV over the past two years. Cooperative Missions receipts for 2004 surpassed 2003 receipts by over \$475,000.
- **What are my church’s giving options?**  
The following are suggested giving plans. Any church is free to change percentage, negatively designate or make other changes. Notify the BGAV Treasurer’s Office in writing of any changes.  
**Option 1** (World Missions 1 track) – Your WM1 gifts beyond Virginia go to ministries selected by the Southern Baptist Convention.  
**Option 2** (World Missions 2 track) – Your WM2 gifts beyond Virginia go to ministries selected by the SBC and BGAV.  
**Option 3** (World Missions 3 track) – Your WM3 gifts beyond Virginia go to ministries selected by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.  
**Option 4** (Customized track) – It was added to the list options to allow a church to design its own giving plan. The BGAV Treasurer will follow the church’s written directions for distribution, including percentages. The church must provide its customized plan to the Treasurer’s Office in writing.
- **My church wants to give to Cooperative Missions, but wants to know why you have more than one option and why a fourth was added?**  
Because the churches asked for options. BGAV churches value the autonomy of the local church and freedom. In a series of budget hearings across Virginia, Baptists asked to have more say in how their mission gifts are distributed. So the BGAV voted to give churches several options: WMI, WMII, WMIII and Custom Designed by the church including negative designations.
- **What is Kingdom Advance and how does it relate to the BGAV?**  
Kingdom Advance is a vision of the BGAV and its Virginia Baptist Mission Board (VBMB) to be an umbrella under which diverse Baptists can cooperate on the “main thing” — spreading the gospel and ministry of Jesus Christ while maintaining their church autonomy and freedom to choose.

Kingdom Advance did not originate as a response to controversy but as a way to expand and magnify missions and evangelism at a time when the state population growth outstrips Christian growth, when there is a growing crisis in church leadership development, and when ministries are opening up all around the world. But messengers at the May 10, 2002, meeting at which Kingdom Advance was adopted embraced it as way for diverse Baptists to work together in unity in a time of denominational controversy.

Executive Director **John Upton** describes four Kingdom Advance elements:

- (1) **Empowering Leaders:** Churches are seeking better ways to identify and call their leaders, and ministers need help in finding places to serve. A more effective staff placement process that does not infringe on congregational autonomy must be developed, and “assimilation” of new ministers into Virginia Baptist life must be intentional and strategic. In addition, “burnout” among ministers is an increasing concern that must definitely be addressed.
- (2) **Courageous Churches:** If our churches are not healthy and vibrant, the BGAV cannot be strong. Accomplishing that goal will require starting more churches, rejuvenating existing churches, offering

customized discipleship and Bible study curriculum, and helping with conflict resolution.

(3) Emerging Leaders: Virginia Baptists are about 15 years away from a leadership crisis in our churches. We're doing a lot better job of talking people out of their call to ministry than in helping them find their call. We need a deliberate program of leadership development that begins with children and continues through young people, college and seminary students and adults.

(4) "Glocal" Missions and Evangelism: Virginia Baptists' missions philosophy is "glocal" – both global and local – with a mobile missions team as its vehicle.

[For more specific information on Kingdom Advance and other matters related to the BGAV and VBMB, log onto the website: [www.vbmb.org](http://www.vbmb.org) or call 800.ALL.BGAV (255.2428).]

- **Define Global and "Glocal."**

**Global** means worldwide. **"Glocal"** was coined to encompass missions, ranging from the local to global scene.

- **Why use the term "Glocal" when it can be confused with "Global?"**

"GLOCAL" is not a word with which everyone is familiar. It is a term that encompasses our personal "mission garden" – VIRGINIA – and the wider mission garden – our WORLD. As Virginia Baptists, our hearts are here and out there, too. Also, it is worthy to note that CBF uses "GLOBAL Missions," and the SBC uses "International Missions." GLOCAL is used to illustrate that missions is a biblical mandate that begins at "home" and is carried around the world. The Great Commission, Matthew 28: 19, is our guide. The coined word has gained broad appeal inside and outside Virginia.

- **Why did the BGAV change its constitution to count only the Virginia portion of the Cooperative Missions toward messenger representation?**

**In one word—fairness.** Messengers approved this change at the annual meeting by more than a two-thirds vote. They felt churches that deliberately bypassed Virginia mission work in their Cooperative Missions giving should not have the same voting strength as those who remain loyal to Virginia causes. No churches were shut out. In fact, churches in the three basic Cooperative Missions options had an increase in messenger representation under the constitution change.

- **Is the BGAV trying to cut its ties with the SBC and its agencies?**

**Absolutely not.** Approximately 50 missionaries serve in the Commonwealth as of the beginning of 2005. One-half are jointly funded by the BGAV, local associations and churches, and the North American Mission Board. One-half are jointly supported by the BGAV, churches and associations. The BGAV also has mission partnerships through the SBC International Mission Board and a contract with the SBC's GuideStone Financial Resources (formerly Annuity Board) to assist pastors and church staff with their retirement and insurance. In fact, the BGAV channeled nearly \$8 million to Southern Baptist causes in 2004.

**No church ever has to choose between being related to BGAV and the SBC.**

- **I've heard my church's gifts to the BGAV go to pay for abortions at Baptist Hospital in Lynchburg?**

**Absolutely not.** The BGAV severed its agency relationship with Virginia Baptist Hospital in 1981. At that time, the BGAV decided to give limited support to the School of Pastoral Care at the hospital, a program of the chaplain's office that trains ministers to do a better job of caring for people. That support was discontinued many years ago when the School of Pastoral Care was closed. Not a penny ever went to pay for abortions.

- **What is the BGAV's position on abortion?**

In November 1997, the BGAV reaffirmed its opposition to abortion.

**Resolution on Abortion:**

On the 20th anniversary of Virginia Baptist definitive statements on abortion, the Christian Life Committee recommends that the messengers to the 1997 Baptist General Association of Virginia affirm the following position:

Whereas, Southern Baptists have historically held a biblical view of the sanctity of human life, and

Whereas, abortion is a very serious moral and spiritual problem of continuing concern to the American people, and

Whereas, Christians have a responsibility to deal with all moral and spiritual issues which affect society, including problems of abortion, and

Whereas, the practice of abortion for selfish non-therapeutic reasons only destroys fetal life, dulls our society's moral sensitivity, and leads to a cheapening of all human life.

Therefore, be it Resolved, that the messengers to the 174th Baptist General Association of Virginia meeting in Roanoke in November, 1997, reaffirm the biblical sacredness and dignity of all human life, including fetal life, and

Be it further Resolved, that in the best interest of our society, we reject any indiscriminate attitude toward abortion, as contrary to the biblical view, and

Be it further Resolved, that we also affirm our conviction about the limited role of government in dealing with matters relating to abortion, and support the right of expectant mothers to the full range of medical services and personal counseling for the preservation of life and health.

- **Why doesn't the BGAV take a stand opposing homosexual behavior and homosexual church leadership?**

**It definitely has taken a stand opposing both**, and has severed relations with two institutions over that issue, most recently Averett University. (See **Averett Addendum**.)\* In 1993, messengers at the BGAV annual meeting adopted the following resolution:

**Resolution on Homosexual Behavior:**

Recognizing that the autonomy of the local congregation historically has been affirmed in the Baptist life, the Virginia Baptist General Board [now called the Virginia Baptist Mission Board] makes the following statement:

We believe that homosexual behavior is one of many sins listed by the Scriptures, and that "the unrighteous will not inherit the Kingdom of God." For the Bible says: "*Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God*" (I Corinthians 6:9-10). "*And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was met*" (Romans 1:27).

We affirm the biblical teaching that homosexual behavior is sinful and unacceptable for Christians. Therefore, we do not endorse elevating those who practice it to positions of leadership.

We make this statement in the spirit of the grace of the Lord Jesus, confessing our own sinfulness: "*For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God*" (Romans 3:23). We seek to bring all people to a loving and redeeming Savior who alone will judge between the redeemed and the lost.

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**\*Averett University addendum** (this page through page 10)

In September 2003, the VBMB executive committee issued a statement of "strong dismay and disagreement" following public comments by a professor, who chairs Averett University's religion department, endorsing an action of the Episcopal Church to ordain an openly homosexual bishop and criticizing a literal method of interpreting the Bible. Also, John Shelby Spong, a controversial retired Episcopal bishop, lectured on the Baptist university's campus, reportedly saying that the God who is revealed in a literal reading of Scripture is "immoral" and "unbelievable."

The VBMB executive committee said: "We ... express our strong dismay and disagreement at the tone and content of public comments by [the professor] on homosexuality and ... Scripture .... We are disappointed in Averett University's decision to host an appearance by **Bishop John Shelby Spong** to speak to the community and students." The comments are "contrary to stated core values of Virginia Baptists," added

**John Upton**, BGAV executive director.

The BGAV's budget committee amended its 2004 budget recommendation, asking messengers at the BGAV's annual meeting, Nov. 13-14, 2003, to escrow Averett's \$350,000 annual allocation "until such time as the [BGAV] covenant committee ... can reach an agreement with the university as to its future relationship" with the BGAV. The messengers approved the recommendation.

**The covenant committee reported** on April 22, 2004, at a meeting of the Virginia Baptist Mission Board's trustees. It strongly affirmed Virginia Baptists' stance on both the authority of Scripture and that homosexual behavior is totally unacceptable. It recommended that the VBMB restore **only \$180,000** of the allocation at that time to fulfill **only** the scholarship obligations made to Baptist students for the 2003-2004.

**The VBMB approved the request, but it kept the remainder of the funds in escrow** while discussions continued with Averett officials, who said the views of the professor and Bishop Spong do not reflect those of the school and that it wanted to maintain a connection with their Baptist heritage and family if possible.

**The VBMB voted Dec. 1, 2004**, to release the escrowed funds under a new agreement that would allow Averett to work with Virginia Baptists to launch a Southwest Virginia Christian Leadership Network center to develop educational opportunities for bivocational ministers, church staff and lay people in Southwest Virginia and the Roanoke Valley. It was to relate to the Averett president's office, apart from the university's religion department and its regular academic program and faculty. **But then, in March 2005, another controversy further jeopardized** Averett's relationship with the BGAV, when news came that a Gay/Straight Alliance, an officially recognized student group at Averett, held a Gay Pride Week. The VBMB executive committee, expressing strong dismay, called a March 17 meeting with Averett officials. They agreed at that meeting on a joint statement to take to April meetings of their respective boards.

**On April 6, 2005, the VBMB voted to take "a separate path" from Averett**, saying: "We honor one another's integrity, share appreciation for each other's missions, and recognize and celebrate 145 years of shared ministry. We join in anticipating great promise for the jointly developed Southwest Virginia Christian Leadership Network. Because of our current differences, we now resolve to walk separate paths with blessings on one another, recognizing that these paths may join again at a future time.

**"As a result of walking separate paths, we agree that:**

- The covenant [between the BGAV and Averett] of April 2004 is dissolved,
- Averett will return unused funds released by the BGAV for the Southwest Virginia Christian Leadership Network, and the BGAV will assume responsibility for this important program,
- The BGAV will no longer recommend trustees for Averett's board, and
- The BGAV and Averett will join in "supporting an active and vigorous Baptist Student Union at Averett [as the BGAV does on many Virginia campuses]."

**On April 15, 2005, the Averett Board released this statement:** "*We recognize and respect the decision of the Virginia Baptist Mission Board. Averett maintains its commitment to being an autonomous flagship Christian University. The Board and the President will develop guidelines to insure that Averett continues to move in that direction. Our... relationship with the Baptist General Association will continue to be enriched through the strong Baptist Student Union.*"

**On April 20, 2005, BGAV Executive Director John Upton responded:** "*We entered into this process with a mutual understanding and a jointly-crafted statement that both of our organizations could evaluate and come to resolution on. We are limited in making a statement about the trustees' action as they called themselves into an executive session to consider the statement and therefore we are uncertain of their actions. Averett's future actions implementing Christian guidelines and standards, consistent with traditional Virginia Baptist values and norms, may allow the BGAV and Averett to rejoin paths at some point in time. We welcome Averett's efforts to reclaim its heritage as a Virginia Baptist university. We are asking our Virginia Baptist family to pray for Averett's board leadership and its administration as a result of their decision to develop guidelines for the university's future direction.*"

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- **What position does the BGAV take on marriage?**

In 1998, BGAV adopted this resolution on the sanctity of marriage of one man to one woman.

### **Resolution Affirming the Sanctity of Marriage:**

The sanctity of marriage continues to face attacks from a variety of cultural attitudes and moral lapses, including those of public and religious leaders. Recent occurrences greatly heighten our awareness of the need to reclaim the moral authority of Biblical principles in marriage and family relationships. The world hungers for models that demonstrate the joy of family love and the rewards of marital fidelity. Today, as never before, believers need strongly to affirm and exemplify Biblical ideals in marriage and family.

God created man and woman in His own image. He established a covenant in marriage between them: “*Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh*” (Gen. 2:24). Families grow as husbands and wives follow God’s command to: “*...be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it...*” (Gen. 1:28). Mutual fidelity, respect and unselfish love characterize the marriage relationship God intends. (Eph. 5:21-23).

God created the marriage covenant as a lifelong commitment between one man and one woman (Matt. 5:27-32). He judges and holds accountable those who break the covenant. He provides grace and the opportunity for reconciliation (Rom. 3:21-26). The Scriptures repeatedly bear witness to God’s love toward persons who sin. They also bear witness to God’s offer of pardon to all who seek His forgiveness through repentance and contrition. (Lk. 18:9-30).

The Virginia Baptist Mission Board emphatically reaffirms the Biblical principles that under gird the sanctity of marriage, recognizes the Biblical call to accountability, and challenges all persons of faith to live out this ideal.

*(This Affirmation on the Sanctity of Marriage was approved by the Virginia Baptist Mission Board on October 14, 1998, and recommended for adoption by the Baptist General Association of Virginia, which approved it at its annual meeting that year.)*

- **What is the relationship between Woman’s Missionary Union of Virginia and the BGAV?**

WMU of Virginia (WMUV) partners as a co-missioner with the BGAV, and this partnership is funded by the Virginia portion of Cooperative Program and the Alma Hunt Offering for Virginia Missions promoted annually in September. The president of WMUV serves as a board member of the Virginia Baptist Mission Board. WMUV has been incorporated as an autonomous Virginia Baptist entity since 1935.

- **How does the BGAV view the ordination of women and their service as deacons or senior pastors?**

The ordination of women and how they shall serve is a local church matter, not a BGAV matter. The autonomy of the local congregation and the priesthood of the believer are the criteria by which the BGAV represents churches.

- **What is the relationship between the *Religious Herald* and the BGAV?**

The mission of the *Religious Herald* is to inform, interpret and inspire in the context of the witness and work of the Baptist General Association of Virginia. The paper publishes news and commentary about Virginia Baptists and the ministries they support. While supportive of the BGAV and its ministries, the editors are solely responsible for the content of the paper. They are not employees of the Virginia Baptist Mission Board or any other Virginia Baptist entity.

Begun in 1828, the *Herald* is published by The Religious Herald Publishing Association, Inc., a private, non-profit, non-stock corporation. All 24 of its trustees are nominated by the BGAV’s Committee on Boards and Committees and are active members of BGAV churches. Trustees of the paper ensure unrestricted editorial freedom, a hallmark of the paper for its entire history.

The *Herald* seeks to chronicle the life of Virginia Baptists, interpret the Baptist scene, promote healthy cooperation among Baptists, serve as a forum for the expression diverse opinions, and uphold Baptist distinctives.

- The BGAV relates to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Why?**  
 Because a significant group of Virginia Baptist churches choose to do missions work through this Baptist organization and asked the BGAV to assist them. Autonomous churches are always free to relate to any organization.
- Does your organization support and endorse the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message?**  
 The BGAV passed a resolution at its 1999 annual meeting that affirmed its support of the *1963 Baptist Faith and Message*. The SBC voted in 2000 to replace it with the *2000 BF&M*. The BGAV has taken no subsequent action but, as an autonomous body of Baptists, still stands behind the 1963 statement as a matter for our autonomous churches to decide for themselves. There are churches in the BGAV that HAVE endorsed the *2000 BF&M*, as is their right. We will, of course, cooperate with them in our mutual effort to focus on the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- In partnering with the IMB, does that mean the BGAV sanctions the SBC'S 2000 revision of the Baptist Faith and Message? Will the IMB and NAMB require strict compliance of their beliefs when in such partnerships with the BGAV?**  
 The BGAV voted in 1999 to endorse the *1963 BF&M*, and we stand by that. However, we cooperate fully with those in the BGAV who choose to endorse the *2000 BF&M*.  
 The BGAV requires no signatures on any version of the *BF&M* to any employee or to churches who wish to work in cooperation with the BGAV. However, NAMB requires the missionaries it funds or jointly funds in Virginia to sign the *2000 BF&M*, and we respect that requirement.
- Why does the BGAV see the need to support a seventh seminary (Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond) beyond the six SBC seminaries? How does the BGAV support theological education?**  
 Actually, counting the John Leland Center, the BGAV supports **eight** institutions for theological education. The BGAV did not start either BTSR or John Leland. But, these schools do receive support from BGAV churches that choose to support them through their giving track. Support also goes in that manner to the six SBC seminaries. The BGAV supports these seminaries because our churches choose to give them support. We send dollars based on three suggested giving tracks. Two of these tracks include BTSR and Leland. When a church chooses one of these tracks, it chooses to support the seminaries. Further, churches can choose to exclude line items within the particular tracks. When churches do not exercise this option, they continue their choice to support the seminaries. A fourth giving track allows churches to customize what they want to support and what percentages to give.
- What is your organization's relationship with the Southern Baptist Convention, current and projected?**  
 As of January 31, 2005, more than 1,000 BGAV churches give all or part of their mission dollars to the SBC through the WM1 and WM2 tracks (see figures in answer to next question). The pastor of a church that supports the only SBC and BGAV through the World Missions 1 (WM1) giving track recently served as BGAV president, after being elected without opposition. He succeeded a president from a WM3 church. It certainly can be said that the BGAV supports the SBC now, and will do so in the future.
- What is your organization's relationship with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, current and projected?**  
 101 BGAV churches had selected the World Missions 3 (WM3) giving plan out of 1,413 active churches as of January 31, 2005. Those churches chose to channel their mission dollars through the CBF. Other figures show that 313 churches selected WM1 and total SBC affiliation, 715 churches selected WM2 that gives support both to the SBC and CBF, and 284 customized their own giving plan. In the WM2 track, missions to the Romany People of Southern Europe is a project we do jointly with CBF at present. Again, the BGAV supports what our churches tell us, and your messengers vote on at each year's annual meeting.
- Your organization relates to the Baptist World Alliance. Why? What is your projected relationship with the BWA?**  
 The BGAV has long been one of the largest international contributors to the BWA. We have had an historic relationship with the BWA for 100 years, cooperating with the world Baptist family in fellowship, ministry, evangelism, relief, and issues related to human rights and religious liberty. We will continue in that relationship and also have applied for direct BWA membership because BGAV churches desire it. [Action on that application is expected at the BWA's 2005 Baptist World Congress in Birmingham, England.] As with any other issue, individual BGAV churches are free to make their own decisions about whether to participate in that relationship.

- **Why does the BGAV sponsor and promote alternative Sunday school literature in addition to the LifeWay materials promoted by the SBC?**

The BGAV exists to serve churches of Virginia. Churches are making a number of choices regarding the choice of their Sunday school literature. We offer training and equipping. We support the decision of the local church to choose what literature they use in Sunday school.

- **Why does the BGAV see the need for another global missions program (CBF Global Missions)? Is there some problem with the SBC's International Mission Board?**

We support the work of the IMB, and our work complements their work. We have no intention of becoming a sending agent. We care more about finding and training “emerging people” who will then follow God’s call on to the mission field. The CBF’s work is not the BGAV’s work, but we cooperate with them because some of our churches choose to do that. We will continue to have international missions projects and partnerships with the IMB and CBF. We also recently signed a new partnership agreement with the SBC North American Mission Board. Missionaries – appointed cooperatively by the BGAV, local associations and churches and NAMB – work and will continue to work in Virginia. Hundreds of our pastors and church staff members, including BGAV employees, depend on the SBC’s GuideStone Financial Resources (formerly the Annuity Board) for insurance retirement.

- **What is the most important priority for your organization – autonomy of the local church or inerrancy of the Bible? Why?**

We do not have to choose between the two. We believe in the historical Baptist principals of the priesthood of the believer and the autonomy of the local church. Also, inerrancy is not a word the Bible used about itself. After years of using the word “inerrancy” in the SBC controversy, the SBC leadership DID NOT use that word in the *2000 BF&M*. The Bible and the SBC did not choose to use that word. Neither do we.

- **What is your organization’s stance on the inerrancy of the Bible in regards to matters of faith, practice, science, history and morality?**

We believe that the Bible is the inspired, authoritative Word of God that we should follow it as our rule of faith and practice and interpret it with balance and integrity.

We believe in the authority of the Scripture and the leading of the Holy Spirit. 2 Timothy 3:15-16 says: “And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”

Many more verses say Scripture is sharper than a two-edged sword and should be a standard for teaching, used to test everything, rightly divided, hidden in our hearts, delighted in, esteemed above all things, trusted in, obeyed, etc., etc.

- **How does your organization view other world religions, such as Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus, Secular Humanists, Latter Day Saints, etc.?**

For that answer, go to John 3, where Jesus is in a conversation with Nicodemus concerning the Kingdom of God. Verse 3 says: “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.” There are no other criteria for acceptance into the Kingdom as far as the BGAV is concerned. We do believe that adherents of other religions should have total freedom of choice in their worship, but as Christians we still believe that Jesus Christ is the only way to God.

- **If your organization had but one choice for their national affiliation, either the SBC or the CBF, which would it choose and why?**

We would never choose. It is the churches’ choice as autonomous bodies to choose their affiliation. The BGAV is just that, a general association of cooperating churches. We respect the churches’ affiliation and the right to choose.

- **Explain the difference between the Alma Hunt Offering and Virginia Missions offering because of the agreement of the WMU of Virginia and the Virginia Baptist Mission Board of the BGAV.**

The Alma Hunt Offering **IS** the Virginia missions offering. As of May 10, 2002, the Alma Hunt Offering is not JUST used in the state, but it has expanded to support other mission endeavors of Virginia Baptist churches. It provides “glocal” connections through special ministry projects designed for Virginia Baptists in response to needs all around the world.

- **What is ‘WINGS’?**  
WINGS is the name of a curriculum resource (for teachers of preschoolers, children, youth, and adults) created by the VBMB and WMU of Virginia and released at the BGAV annual meeting in November 2003.

It is a cross between missions education and spiritual formation in that it views missions service as an extension of the Christian spiritual life and is designed to help people to “connect and fly with the wind of God’s Spirit.” It is a simple planning model that teachers will be able to use to craft their own learning sessions.

- **Define International Mission Board and North American Mission Board.**  
The SBC uses these terms to define its international missions endeavors overseas (IMB) and missions in North America (NAMB).
- **What does the BGAV do to start new churches?**  
The Courageous Churches Team provides such assistance as new church investment grants, pastoral assistance, church planter assessment and training “boot camps,” and one-on-one field consultations. Over two-years (2003-04), Virginia Baptists started 62 new churches, now at various stages of becoming contributing, active BGAV churches.
- **Where does the annual Lottie Moon Christmas Offering money go?**  
The IMB says that 100% of this offering goes to missions on the mission field. That is the only answer given. Anything further would have to come from the IMB.
- **Where does the annual Annie Armstrong Easter Offering money go?**  
According to the North American Mission Board, this money is used in the USA in cooperation with state conventions and associations, such as the BGAV, and with local associations and churches. One example of such a program would be new church starts.
- **Where does the annual CBF Global Missions Offering money go?**  
According to the CBF Global Missions office, it is used for missions in the United States and overseas.
- **How will a BGAV church’s mission gifts be disbursed, and by what agency, if that particular church chooses no longer to contribute to the SBC?**  
All your church’s gifts channeled through the BGAV will be strictly distributed according to your church’s giving plan. No other method of distribution is allowed. We make EVERY attempt to contact a church when an undesignated gift arrives.
- **How are mission gifts to CBF disbursed and by what agency?**  
All mission gifts given through the BGAV World Missions 3 track to CBF are distributed by the BGAV to CBF, and they are then disbursed according to the CBF budget.
- **I want someone to come to my church to answer questions like these for our congregation. Would the BGAV send someone?**  
**Absolutely.** Please call the Virginia Baptist Resource Center in Richmond and ask to speak to the Executive Director’s Office. Our number is 800.ALL.BGAV (255.2428) or 1.804.915.5000. Call today!

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *The article below was written by Bob Allen, managing editor of EthicsDaily.com, reporting the first printing of the Truthfully Speaking.... booklet in 2003. It has been adapted and updated for use in the second, third and fourth printings in 2004 and 2005.*

## **Church Stealing Charged in States With Competing Conventions**

The presence of separate conventions identified with the Southern Baptist Convention in three states has prompted charges of “sheep-stealing,” or seeking to lure congregations out of one fold into the other.

Concerns are sufficient in the Baptist General Association of Virginia for leadership to issue booklet of “frequently asked questions” being distributed among the state’s churches.

“Takeover of churches is a fact of life in Virginia and other state Baptist bodies across the country,” says the book, titled ***Truthfully Speaking: The Executive Director and the Treasurer of the Baptist General Association of Virginia Respond to Frequently Asked Questions About the BGAV.***

### **Countering ‘Untruths’**

The book attempts to counter “untruths and half-truths,” which it says “play a big part in the takeover strategy.”

“For example, BGAV leaders have confronted those who spread the word that the BGAV condones abortion and homosexuality as a lifestyle. Such attempts to intentionally misinform Virginia Baptists are totally unacceptable!”

As of January 31, 2005, some 254 churches had left the BGAV to align with Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia (SBCV), a pro-Southern Baptist Convention group formed in 1996 after failing to change the moderate-led BGAV from within. Another 42 churches align dually with both conventions, typically a first step toward severing ties with the BGAV. At last count, eight churches had returned to BGAV membership.

Questions addressed in the document include whether the BGAV is trying to cut ties with the SBC and its agencies, as its opponents suggest.

“Absolutely not,” the BGAV leaders respond, noting that the BGAV channeled nearly \$8 million to Southern Baptist causes in 2004.

**Why does the BGAV sponsor** and promote alternative Sunday school literature in addition to LifeWay Christian Resources materials promoted by the SBC? “We support the decision of the local church to choose what literature they use in Sunday school.”

**What is the organization’s relationship** with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship? 101 of the state’s 1,413 active churches gave to a budget option sending all of their world mission gifts to the Atlanta-based CBF as of January 31, 2005. Another 313 chose another plan affiliated solely with the SBC, 715 churches selected an option which funds both, and 284 customized their own plan.

**What is the organization’s relationship** with the Baptist World Alliance? The BGAV reports that it is one of the largest international givers to the BWA, cooperating with the BWA in fellowship, ministry, evangelism, relief and issues related to human rights and religious liberty. The BGAV will continue its 100-year relationship with the BWA because BGAV churches desire it. Individual churches are free to opt out of that relationship.

### **What About Homosexuality and Abortion?**

**Others question whether the BGAV is** soft on homosexuality and abortion. Answers cite resolutions affirming the sanctity of fetal life and characterizing homosexual behavior as “sinful and unacceptable for Christians.” Allegations to the contrary on those issues “have appeared in publications of the SBCV and been repeated in e-mails and in churches across Virginia,” the book says, quoting Executive Director **John Upton** as declaring, “Baptists have every right to express their views and to affiliate as they wish, but integrity demands that they do so truthfully.”

### **Conflicting Statements**

**Doyle Chauncey**, executive director of the Southern Baptist Conservatives Of Virginia, said the statement that such charges have been in SBCV publications is “untrue.” A similar Q&A section on the breakaway convention’s website responds to those who accuse the SBCV of using a strategy of trying to “infiltrate and steal BGAV churches by using false information and deceptive tactics.”

“It is the official position of the SBCV that its employees will NOT in any way court a BGAV church,” the answer says. [EDITOR’S NOTE: The Sept-Oct. 2003 issue of *Proclaimer*, the SBCV’s “flagship communications piece,” lists steps a church could take to withdraw from the BGAV. See “Evergreen Church Joins the SBCV,” page 6. That issue was posted by the SBCV at [www.sbcv.org/resources/proclaimer/issues/sept\\_oct03.pdf](http://www.sbcv.org/resources/proclaimer/issues/sept_oct03.pdf). If that link fails to connect, the Virginia Baptist Mission Board has copies on file.]

**The SBCV isn’t the only convention accused of church rustling.** The Missouri Baptist Convention news journal *The Pathway* recently accused the breakaway Baptist General Convention of Missouri of hiring a “pitchman” to make calls on churches in the conservative-controlled MBC. The BGCM denied it is interested in luring churches away from the MBC.

**Unlike Virginia and Texas,** where the SBC Executive Committee receives and distributes funds from two conventions, one moderate and one conservative, the national body declined to receive money from the new [moderate] Missouri group, saying it wasn’t in Southern Baptists’ best interest to cooperate with another group opposed to the conservative leadership of the Missouri Baptist Convention. Individual churches in the newer convention may, however, contribute to the SBC directly.

**The BGAV booklet also describes the anatomy of the typical “takeover” of a local church.** [See “Church Takeovers: A True Virginia Baptist Story” in this book.]

“Takeover tactics explode lives, reputations and relationships in an attempt to discredit and dis-fellowship any opposition that stands in the way,” it says. “They pit people against each other, creating fear, anger and discord.”

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Listen to the pain of some Virginia Baptist church members who have experienced attempts, some successful and some unsuccessful, by ultraconservatives to takeover their churches and move them out of the Baptist General Association of Virginia (BGAV.) **They are first-hand observers who expose things that are really happening in Virginia, but wish to remain anonymous so they won't create more pain among family, friends and church members who have found themselves in conflict. Invariably, when one of the interviewees heard what had happened in other churches, he or she said something like: "That's what happened to us! How did they know that?"**

### **Church Takeovers: A True Virginia Baptist Story**

"This thing [fundamentalist takeovers of churches] has split families and friends; some won't even talk to each other anymore," the Virginia Baptist lay person said with obvious pain. "It's taking us a long time to heal."

If this Virginia Baptist, one of several interviewed from different churches, had been standing in a literal war zone, he would have described the smell of scorched earth and the sight of destroyed buildings, bomb craters and battered bodies.

Instead, he stood in a fractured church and spoke of the "spiritual stench" created by scorched lives, lost trust, deep grief, great anger, overwhelming bitterness, wounded spirits, and much disgust all rolled into one.

This Virginia Baptist and others interviewed did not speak about a shooting war but of a no-holds-barred political battle by ultra-conservatives to take over her or his church and move it out of the Baptist General Association of Virginia (BGAV) into another state Baptist group. (See "**Church Stealing Charged in States With Competing Conventions,**" in this issue of *Truthfully Speaking*....)

People who have experienced takeover, describe it as an effort to gain victory at any cost – no matter how many people may get hurt or discredited or how many untruths and half-truths must be told.

One person said takeover tactics remind him of the neutron bomb developed in earlier years – a weapon that kills people with radiation but leaves most buildings intact. Takeover tactics explode lives, reputations and relationships in an attempt to discredit and dis-fellowship any opposition that stands in the way. They pit people against each other, creating fear, anger and discord.

"My Bible says that God is not the author of anger, fear, discord and confusion," said one person, whose church survived the takeover attempt, but went through a long healing process. "They sowed those unholy seeds in my church."

### **Correct Information – an Important Element**

The above church survived because correct information got into the hands of enough people to head off the process, but it left no less pain. In many situations, information is spread too little, too late, or not at all.

**Why is that?** "Hindsight is 20-20, but it's easy to see that there's enough blame to go around," said one former member of a church that was taken over. "Our previous pastor sheltered us from the denominational controversy, our messengers don't attend the sessions at Baptist meetings, our people don't read about what is happening and get upset when anyone tries to tell them the truth."

A fundamentalist pastor publicly told one teacher, who talked about the controversial *2000 Baptist Faith and Message* in her Sunday school class, that she had "desecrated" the class by discussing such issues.

### **A Lesson Learned**

"One of the most important lessons learned was that a great deal of effort and time must go into providing information on both sides of the issues so everyone may make a decision based on correct information," one church member said.

"We need to know where we have been as Baptists, where we are now, and in which direction we need to go to protect the autonomy of the local church congregation, which in turn protects our basic beliefs of individual religious freedom and responsibility," the church member continued.

"We will lose our individual religious freedom if we allow a pastor who believes strongly in pastoral authority to make decisions for us," the church member said.

"People need to know this is happening – that the pastor sometimes acts as if he believes that he serves in the role of the Holy Spirit – to dwell with us (John 14:17), to inspire the Scriptures and speak through them (Acts 1:16) according to his understanding of what the Scriptures mean to him..."

"We are not supposed to read our Bible and seek understanding through the Holy Spirit that dwells within us. This is why the *Baptist Faith and Message* recently had deleted from its content that '...Jesus Christ is the criterion for interpretation of the Scriptures,'" the church member said.

## **How Takeovers Happen**

Takeovers happen different ways in different locations: Sometimes, they begin slowly and move along subtly, a pastor relates. A fundamentalist with a strong personality comes into the church and starts sewing seeds of discord. He may hold private meetings to convince individuals that the truth is not being proclaimed in that church.

He gives liberally and offers to serve. People trust him. He becomes a Sunday school teacher, a deacon, and chairman of committees. He may quietly assemble followers. He or others may secretly tape Sunday school classes to ferret out dissent.

Other new members may join the church with the hidden agenda to align with him. Some church members may catch on early, but others won't believe them and criticize them, even as he and his group begin to sew discontent and manipulate the nomination and election processes for church positions.

Then the pastor leaves to go to another church, and the group of crusaders begins to manipulate the replacement process and to stack the pulpit committee with people who will vote to bring in a like-minded pastor.

## **Search Committee Deceit**

First-hand observers tell of cases in which resumes and recommendation letters were doctored to conceal the fundamentalist background of a candidate in previous churches. The rationale: "We can't let the people see that type of information."

And they tell of search committees where a chairman eliminates resumes and letters of recommendation from any other source but a fundamentalist one. They tell of pulpit committees who become so secretive about the process that no one knows anything until a candidate is brought forward.

## **Pastoral Deceit**

In another scenario, perhaps a pastor leaves, and a pulpit committee begins the search in good faith. They may ask a potential pastor if he has any political agenda, where he stands on certain issues, and if he supports the BGAV.

In too many cases, they get "a lie – that's the only thing you can call it," one church member said. He will tell them what they want to hear and that he is 100 percent behind the BGAV. Then, at some point, he begins the drumbeat to ignore the BGAV and its programs and publications and eventually to leave its membership to join the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia (SBCV).

He begins to inundate the church with outside speakers and publications that advocate a fundamentalist point of view that contradicts what he told the pulpit committee and what he is now preaching himself.

Asked what he would do differently in the future, a former pulpit committee member said, "I'd insist on giving the prospective pastor a lie detector test."

"My new pastor took off his 'sheep's clothing' fairly soon," another person related, "and began to run down the BGAV with what turned out to be lies about such issues as homosexuality, abortion, Bible belief, Cooperative Program support, relations with the SBC, etc." For example, many Baptists are falsely led to believe that the BGAV supports homosexual behavior, employs known homosexuals, and condone same-sex marriages.

## **Congregational Deceit**

New people, often with a hidden agenda, begin to join and support his viewpoint and help him browbeat and intimidate people who try to raise an objection.

People who object will be publicly embarrassed, backstabbed with gossip, pitted against each other, or told they are unspiritual when they object because God talks directly to the pastor and not to them. They are told to leave the church or stay home if they disagree. Often conspirators call committee meetings and fail to invite those who might disagree.

Disgusted and disillusioned people begin to leave "and new ones come in as fast as the older ones leave," said one former member of a taken-over church.

## **Women Targeted and Browbeaten**

Women become a special target. They are intimidated, embarrassed, silenced rudely, talked down to or lectured. Even long-time women Sunday school teachers may not be allowed to teach any class with a man in it – "even down to the fourth-grade level," one woman said.

Only the pastor's view of what the Bible says about the role of women in marriage and in the church is allowed – and only part of what the Bible says about women is preached, according to those interviewed.

Members of Woman's Missionary Union, usually the people in the church most informed about the denomination, are marginalized even more. Mailed materials related to WMU may be thrown in the trash. The pastor may adamantly refuse to allow WMU promotions or speakers.

The pastor may try to change the church's pre-selected patterns of giving through the BGAV so its money won't have to mix with any "tainted money" going to groups with which he disagrees.

“Our pastor said if your dollar lies in the offering plate with a dollar someone gave to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, that makes you sinful,” one member said.

Church members report that people involved in takeovers try to convince them that the BGAV opposes and will not cooperate with the Southern Baptist Convention.

“We have to get the word out that that is untrue,” one said. The BGAV cooperates with all willing Baptists in missions, and it allows churches to give through different tracks to support different causes.

**“That’s called the autonomy of the local church – the very thing the people taking over want to destroy.”**

# Takeovers and Untruths Now A Fact of Life – True Virginia Baptist Facts

Takeover of churches is a fact of life in Virginia and other state Baptist bodies across the country.

It's part of more than two decades of denominational controversy that focused first on the national Southern Baptist scene and then began to invade churches, associations, state conventions, seminaries, and missions at home and overseas.

Controversy has resulted in competing state conventions forming in three states – Virginia, Texas and Missouri and may soon affect North Carolina. The Virginia body that split from the Baptist General Association of Virginia (BGAV) in 1996 is the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia (SBCV).

As of January 31, 2005, some 296 BGAV churches had either left to align only with the SBCV (254) or to align dually with the SBCV and the BGAV (42). [At last count, eight churches had returned to the BGAV.] Usually, dual alignment leads to the next step in the process – leaving the BGAV altogether.

Untruths and half-truths play a big part in the takeover strategy. For example, BGAV leaders have confronted those who spread the untruthful word that the BGAV condones abortion and homosexuality as a lifestyle.

Such attempts to intentionally misinform Virginia Baptists are totally unacceptable!

Those kinds of charges have appeared in publications of the SBCV and been repeated in emails and in churches across Virginia.

“Baptists have every right to express their views and to affiliate as they wish, but integrity demands that they do so truthfully,” declared BGAV Executive Director **John Upton**.

“The BGAV went firmly on record in our 1993 annual meeting that, while we recognize the autonomy of the local congregation, ‘We affirm the biblical teaching that homosexual behavior is sinful and unacceptable for Christians. Therefore, we do not endorse elevating those who practice to positions of leadership.’” Upton said.

The resolution further resolved: “We make this statement in the spirit and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, confessing our own sinfulness: ‘For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God’ (Romans 3:23). We seek to bring all people to a loving and redeeming Savior, who alone will judge between the redeemed and the lost.”

Upton and BGAV Treasurer **Eddie Stratton** also disagreed strongly with “indiscriminate statements” about the BGAV’s stance on abortion.

“The BGAV strongly reaffirmed its opposition to abortion in our 1997 annual session, on the 20th anniversary of previous definite statements on abortion,” Stratton said.

That resolution noted that Baptists have “historically held a biblical view of the sanctity of human life.” It said, “...the practice of abortion for selfish, non-therapeutic reasons only destroys fetal life, dulls our society’s moral sensitivity, and leads to the cheapening of all human life.” It resolved that “in the best interests of our society, we reject any indiscriminate attitude toward abortion, as contrary to the biblical view....”

Both BGAV leaders also responded to statements critical of the BGAV because certain Baptist individuals and churches may hold differing views abortion and homosexuality.

“The BGAV has spoken decisively as a body on these issues in annual sessions,” Upton said.

Concerning the virgin birth – there is absolutely NO TRUTH to the false accusation floating that the “BGAV does not believe in the virgin birth.” The Bible speaks clearly on that Upton said.

The full wording of the 1993 and 1997 resolutions on homosexuality and abortion may be found on the BGAV website at [www.vbmb.org](http://www.vbmb.org), as well as in the 1993 and 1997 Virginia Baptist annual reports respectively.

[See further information on the homosexuality issue in the Question & Answer portion of this booklet.]

# What Virginia Baptists Support

(in alphabetical order)

## **Annuity Board of the SBC (See GuideStone Financial Resources)**

### **Associated Baptist Press**

Associated Baptist Press is the nation's first and only independent news service created by and for Baptists. Our mission is to serve Christ by providing credible and compelling information about matters of faith. Most ABP subscribers are editors of Baptist newspapers, Christian magazines and daily newspapers that cover religion. Since 1992, usage of ABP in Baptist newspapers has risen 36 percent. In addition, 73 of America's leading daily newspapers now subscribe. Among them: *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and *Dallas Morning News*.

### **At Home Ministries**

Unlocking ministry to those friends who need assistance, short or long-term, in order to continue to live independently. There are several key purposes within At Home Ministries: Provide a specially focused ministry that supplements existing ministries for the aging by encouraging more members of the congregation to volunteer their gifts; Aid family caregivers in caring for their loved ones; and Network with existing community resources.

### **Baptist Center for Ethics**

Baptist Center for Ethics' mission is to provide proactive, positive and practical ethics resources and services to congregations. BCE believes church leaders and faith communities possess the keys to developing moral character, teaching sound decision making, offering a clear moral witness to the larger culture and advancing social change. Our goal is to equip leaders and churches with quality, relevant resources and services from a Christo-centric perspective. We began in 1991 with high hopes of finding new ways to outfit churches and the Christian community in positive and creative ways. We have now established a niche for ourselves as a wellspring for fresh ideas, cutting-edge resources and timely services.

### **Baptist Extension Board**

The Extension Board serves to assist Baptist General Association of Virginia congregations by providing first and second mortgage loans at an interest rate for land acquisition or church building construction. Interest paid provides additional loan funds for churches in need.

### **Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty**

Mission Statement: *The mission of the Baptist Joint Committee is to defend and extend God-given religious liberty for all, bringing a uniquely Baptist witness to the principle that religion must be freely exercised, neither advanced nor inhibited by government.*

"No voice at the intersection of church and state has been more consistent, reliable and sensible during the past six decades than that of the Baptist Joint Committee. That's why no voice today is more trusted. As we face the challenges of the year 2000 and beyond, we recommit ourselves to the proven principle that the separation of church and state is the best way to ensure religious liberty for all." – Brent Walker, executive director, BJCPA

### **Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond**

BTSR is a distinctively Baptist school operating in the context of an ecumenical consortium in Richmond, Virginia. Our mission is to provide advanced theological education and training for effective leadership in the various ministries of the church for men and women who are called and committed to Christian ministry.

### **Baptist World Alliance**

The purpose of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) is to empower and enable national Baptist leaders to effectively witness and minister in the name of Jesus Christ and to represent and support Baptists throughout the world in defense of human rights and religious freedom. The BWA is a fellowship of 211 Baptist unions and conventions comprising a membership of more than 32 million baptized believers. This represents a community of more than 80 million Baptists ministering in more than 200 countries. The BWA unites Baptist worldwide, leads in world evangelism, responds to people in need, and defends human rights. The goals of the BWA: To Unite Baptists Worldwide (for global impact for Christ); To Lead in World Evangelization; To Respond to People in Need; To Defend Human Rights.

### **BGAV Support Ministries (formerly Administrative Ministries)**

This category includes services provided by the Executive Director's Office and the Treasurer's Office. Expenses related to Cooperative Program promotion; the Virginia Baptist directory, diary, and annual; VBMB board meetings; and the annual BGAV meeting all come from this category. Debt retirement is also listed under this category. Currently, the Board has an outstanding note related to the Waste Water Treatment Plant at Eagle Eyrie.

### **Bluefield College**

Bluefield College is a private, Christ-centered, liberal arts college located in the beautiful mountains of southwestern Virginia. Fully accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the college offers challenging and personalized instruction leading to baccalaureate degrees in 21 majors of study, including business, criminal justice, teacher education, music and athletic training. A fully approved, accelerated program for working adults offers degree opportunities in organizational management and development and administration of justice.

### **Center for Baptist Heritage and Studies**

Established in 2000 following an agreement between the Baptist General Association of Virginia, the University of Richmond and the Virginia Baptist Historical Society, the Center for Baptist Heritage & Studies seeks to champion Baptist distinctives and Baptist heritage and to provide educational opportunities related to Baptist distinctives, history and heritage. It accomplishes its mission in numerous ways, including making available Baptist records and historical materials and through serving as a research and resource center. The Center offers academic and special interest courses through the School of Continuing Studies at the University of Richmond. The Center also presents lectures, seminars, and workshops.

### **Chaplain Service of the Churches of Virginia, Inc.**

The Chaplain Service receives no state or federal funds. Virginia is the only state that does not have state-subsidized chaplains. Funding is provided by 18 denominational organizations, foundations, businesses, and individuals. Our chaplains are assigned to 28 prisons and seven juvenile correctional centers. They preach the Gospel, teach the Bible, counsel the women, men, and youth prisoners, and coordinate the volunteers who assist the chaplain with worship services and musical programs. People ask why we care about these people who have committed horrible crimes or who have been involved in drugs and are now locked up away from decent, law-abiding people. The answer is that God and Jesus care for them. And the realistic fact is that the majority of the men, women, and youth will be released and will return to their communities, their friends, and a workplace. We want them to return as changed people – responsible, caring citizens who will make a positive contribution to society – and not as people who are looking for further criminal behavior. We want them to be accepted as people who have paid their debt and want to live a life of new beginnings.

### **Children's Home of Virginia Baptists**

The Children's Home of Virginia Baptists, Inc. was founded in 1948 when the Baptist General Association of Virginia, the Baptist General Convention and the Baptist State Convention joined hands in a unified effort to provide a home for "homeless children." In addition to providing for the physical well being of its children, the Home seeks to develop each child to the maximum of his potential so that he may take his place in the larger community as a responsible citizen. The Home focuses on the whole child – his spiritual, emotional and academic needs.

### **Cooperative Baptist Fellowship**

**Mission Statement:** *We are a fellowship of Baptist Christians and churches who share a passion for the Great Commission of Jesus Christ and a commitment to Baptist principles of faith and practice. Our mission: serving Christians and churches as they discover and fulfill their God-given mission.*

**Priorities:** The Mission Statement identifies seven "priority initiatives" for the Fellowship: **DOING** missions in a world without borders; **CHAMPIONING** Baptist principles of faith and practice; **AFFIRMING** our diversity, including – but not limited to – ethnicity, race and gender, as a gift from God; **NETWORKING** Baptist churches and individuals for cooperation, encouragement, and exchange of information and ideas; **EMPOWERING** churches through resources more than programs; **EMPHASIZING** strategic partnerships more than owning institutions and **COOPERATING** through new ventures that encourage innovative and creative approaches to missions and ministry for the 21st century.

### **Courageous Churches ministries**

**Mission Statement:** *To further the cause of Christ through church planting, revitalizing and supporting existing churches and developing Bible study curriculum.*

**21c** – "The premier vision-casting event in Virginia Baptist life, 21c is a statewide event that explores and proclaims the emerging edge of where God is at work to redeem our culture. Internationally known practitioners and consultants offer inspiration and instruction in evangelism, leadership, and church growth in a dynamic worship

setting. This contagious event has tripled in attendance in the last three years. A life-changing experience!”

**Senior Adult Sing and Share Festival of Praise** – a workshop and enrichment event for those with senior adult music ministries. Senior Adult Music groups learn and prepare 3-4 pieces of music suitable for use in worship under the direction of a guest clinician. All groups who attend are also encouraged to share a few of their own prepared pieces with the entire group.

**Summer Music Camp** – A five-day camp in two parallel tracks held at Eagle Eyrie and based on musical experiences for children and youth who have completed grades 4 - 8. Over 400 campers and counselors participate each summer in what has become known as one of the best camps of its kind in the United States.

**Church Music Conference** – A training and enrichment event for those involved in music ministry: ministers of music, music directors, choir members, worship teams, organists and keyboardists, and children’s choir leaders. Features skill sessions and specialty tracks, choral lab experiences with nationally known clinicians, and vibrant and thought provoking worship sessions.

**Pastor & Friends Conference** – This conference (held during the spring) provides an opportunity for pastors and leaders to come together from across the Commonwealth of Virginia to praise God, fellowship with co-laborers in the ministry, and learn about the contemporary “how-to’s” of doing ministry within their local context. Local pastors, church leaders, and denominational workers are used to facilitate the conference sessions, thereby enabling and empowering their counterparts not only with theory but also with proven practice. This event has proven to be an energizing force for Virginia Baptist churches.

**Church Growth & Evangelism Conference** – This conference (held during the winter) gives church leaders the opportunity not only to learn about the latest tools for church growth and evangelism, but also to make an assessment of the current tools being used by their respective churches. One the primary focuses of this conference is to help church leaders come to some understanding about their unique place in the Kingdom of God, as well as the ministerial task that has been assigned to them by God within both their local context and abroad. This conference is more of a “roll-up-your-sleeves” type of conference that enables a church to make a critical self-evaluation.

### **Eagle Eyrie Baptist Conference Center**

The flagship conference center for Virginia Baptists.

### **Emerging Leaders ministries**

**Mission Statement:** *To assist churches in capturing the vision through Identifying, Nurturing, Equipping, Deploying, and Re-Investing God-Called Leaders for Virginia Baptist Churches.*

**Junior and Senior High Weekends** – To provide celebrative worship, special interest conferences that focus on age-appropriate issues facing junior high and senior high teenagers. Training is also provided for adults working with youth in the local church.

**Regional Emerging Leaders Leadership Conferences** – To assist emerging leaders in exploring how to listen, learn, and respond to God’s call in their lives.

**Summer Youth Ministry Conference** – The purpose of the summer youth ministry focus is to provide information and resources to youth workers and youth ministry interns serving Virginia Baptist churches and associations. This conference – open to college and seminary students, part-time youth leaders, and volunteers – offers basic assistance in planning a summer program and assists in the fine-tuning of youth ministry skills. Curriculum is planned for both professional youth ministers and youth ministry interns.

**Emerging Leaders Summit** – Summer adventure that challenges youth to develop a deeper, more committed life to Jesus Christ through morning celebrations, morning Bible study groups, adventure recreation, special interest conferences, celebrative worship, and evening fellowships featuring something special each evening for the students.

**Youth Evangelism Conference** – To create a large-scale “harvest” event of the highest quality in the spiritual, administrative, promotional, and fiscal realms. Includes optional mission project.

**Collegiate Ministries** – Nine BSU centers and 162 BSU programs on Virginia campuses.

### **Empowering Leaders ministries**

**Mission Statement:** *To partner with God as His kingdom advances through an intentional, energetic matching of clergy and churches, through nurturing cooperative relationships and caring networks, and through learning opportunities and spiritual renewal.*

**Retired Ministers Supplement** – providing supplementary retirement benefits for retired ministers or their surviving spouses who meet minimum income limits.

**Counseling and Education** – connects ministers and families with a variety of helping services and provides opportunities for personal and professional growth and skill development through cutting-edge educational opportunities.

**Expanded Church Annuity Plan** – encourages church employees to prepare for retirement by providing matching retirement contributions and basic safety net protection benefits in partnership with the SBC Annuity Board.

## **Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the SBC**

*“No matter what issues your family is facing, the Bible offers sure and solid solutions. And we’re committed to serving you by looking to the power and wisdom of Scripture to bear on the difficult moral and social issues impacting your faith and family. We are confident you’ll discover here that your faith and family will benefit greatly from confronting the troubling issues of modern life by heeding God’s Truths as revealed in the Bible.”* Richard Land, host, *For Faith & Family* and president, The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission.

## **Fork Union Military Academy**

**Mission Statement:** *The mission of Fork Union Military Academy is to provide young men a college preparatory education in a residential, Christian environment. Using the best aspects of the military system, the Academy teaches its cadets responsibility, leadership, discipline, and pride by providing an atmosphere in which spiritual, mental, and physical growth can flourish.*

## **Glocal Missions and Evangelism ministries**

**Mission Statement:** *To involve churches in ministry and evangelism for the cause of Christ both globally and locally.*

**International Partnership Missions** – *Virginia Baptists are committed to mission partnerships with the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship and Italian Baptist Union. Work continues with Brazilian Baptists, Austrian Baptists, Baptists in the Czech Republic, and the Romany people group in Europe and Asia. The Glocal Missions and Evangelism Team also organizes projects in China and south India.*

**Disaster Relief** – A mission of the Virginia Baptist Men, the Disaster Relief ministry remains ready to respond to natural and man-made disasters in the U.S. and throughout the world. Disaster Relief missions include mass feeding, mud out and recovery, rebuilding, and water purification. Virginia Baptists have responded to several major hurricanes in Florida, West Virginia and Virginia; ice storms in New York, Ohio, and North Carolina; flooding in Boston, and international disasters in Kosovo, Nicaragua, Honduras, India, and El Salvador, as well as to the 2004 tsunami in Asia, and the September 11, 2001, terror attacks in New York City and Washington, D.C.

**Mission Opportunity Points (MOPs)** – MOPs are one-to-two week mission projects for adults, youth, and church mission teams in Virginia and surrounding states. Typical mission needs include church construction, backyard and mission Vacation Bible School, sports camps, music camps, and resort missions.

**Impact Virginia!** – Impact Virginia is a coed youth mission opportunity involving hands-on ministry projects, primarily in Virginia. Youth from across the state join forces to make an impact on local communities, focusing primarily on home renovation and the construction needs of low-income families.

**Transformers** – A mission of the Virginia Baptist Men, Transformers is an adult mission effort to help low-income families remain safe, warm and dry. Two or three Transformer camps are held each year around the state where Virginia Baptist adults come and work to transform a community for Christ. Local churches and associations form year-round Transformer chapters for ongoing mission in their communities.

**Collegiate Missions** – Mission service opportunities for college students cover a wide range of assignments in a wide range of geographical and cultural settings, both in Virginia and throughout the world. Opportunities for service are with a variety of partners, including Virginia Baptist partnerships, the North American Mission Board, the International Mission Board, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and selected ecumenical ministries. Terms of service can be from one week to two years. Students involved in BSU/BCM groups work throughout the year to raise monies in support of collegiate missions. From these efforts, collegians involved in Virginia BSUs/BCMs have most, if not all, of their expenses provided by the Collegiate Missions Program.

**Special Needs Ministries** – Nationwide, about 20,000 persons are enrolled in church special education classes, but many special needs persons are still being neglected. When a church has an effective special education ministry, it provides tremendous benefit to special needs persons, their families, and the church as a whole.

**Literacy Mission Ministries** – Across Virginia, thousands of persons remain illiterate or have difficulty with daily functioning because of poor reading and writing skills. Churches have a unique opportunity, not only to help these persons with their literacy needs, but also to share the Gospel with them through literacy missions. Training is available, through the Virginia Baptist Mission Board, in teaching English as a second language, in adult reading and writing, and in tutoring children and youth.

**Military Ministries** – Of the 50 states in the U.S., Virginia has one of the highest concentrations of military personnel. Whether they are the officers who serve at the Pentagon in Northern Virginia, or the Norfolk-based sailors who must leave their families behind while deployed overseas, those who help to protect our country often turn to churches for help.

**Appalachian Regional Ministry** – The Appalachian Regional Ministry is a multi-state intentional mission response to the spiritual and physical needs of persons living in the Appalachian region.

### **Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary of the SBC**

Under the Lordship of Christ, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary provides educational and ministry experiences to shape Christian leaders through programs which emphasize spiritual growth, biblically-based scholarship, and ministry skills development – all within a multicultural setting. Within this strategic setting, the seminary equips men and women to...

*Walk more closely with God*

*Understand more clearly the heart of the Christian faith*

*Develop a passion for fulfilling Christ's great commission*

*Strengthen God-given gifts to serve and equip others*

*Minister effectively to people of all cultures.*

Dedicated to missions, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary commits itself to the lives of its students and to the churches it serves. Our dream is to become the primary provider of effective Christian leaders for the churches of tomorrow.

### **GuideStone Financial Resources of the SBC (formerly Annuity Board)**

**Mission Statement:** GuideStone Financial Resources exists to assist the churches and other denominational entities by making available retirement plan services, life and health coverage, risk management programs and personal and institutional investment programs. The work of GuideStone is guided by its Vision Statement: *To honor the Lord by being a "Life Partner" with our participants in enhancing their financial security.* In addition we receive and administer funds for retired ministers or their widows in need.

### **Hargrave Military Academy**

**Mission Statement:** *The purpose of Hargrave is to assist young men and women of secondary school age to become knowledgeable, thinking, and responsible citizens of their community, nation, and world. Our educational program is based on rigorous instruction in basic skills and in preparation for further study in the arts and sciences. We believe that to be effective, the educational process must be reinforced by order, structure, and discipline, and we feel that the worth, potential, and integrity of the individual must be promoted in every area of school life. For our students to mature spiritually, socially, emotionally, and physically, as well as intellectually, we must seek to achieve our goals within a healthy, wholesome environment, in which the Christian faith and principles pervade all aspects of the school program.*

### **Impact Northeast**

Virginia Baptists partner with Baptist conventions of Alabama, District of Columbia, Maryland/Delaware, Mississippi, North Carolina, New England, New York, Pennsylvania/South Jersey, Tennessee, and Texas to reach the 25% of the U.S. population who live in the Northeast. Goals include establishment of churches, student ministries, church revitalization, and leadership development

### **International Mission Board of the SBC**

**Mission Statement:** *The mission of the International Mission Board, SBC, is to lead Southern Baptists in international missions efforts to evangelize the lost, disciple believers, develop churches and minister to people in need. Leading Southern Baptists is done by mobilizing prayer support, appointing missionaries, enlisting volunteers, channeling financial support and communicating how God is working overseas.* The International Mission Board (formerly Foreign Mission Board) is an entity of the Southern Baptist Convention. The board's main objective is presenting the gospel of Jesus Christ in order to lead individuals to saving faith in Him and result in church-planting movements among all the peoples of the world.

### **John Leland Center for Theological Studies**

The mission of the John Leland Center is to equip transformational leaders for global ministry. We are committed to bringing together scholars, practitioners and students from our area and around the world, who are called to this task.

### **Kingdom Advance New Initiatives**

This is our first initiative. It is a committed effort to train Hispanic pastors across Virginia. In addition, churches across Virginia will be established and trained to work with Arab/Muslim people in their community. There are additional initiatives in the planning stages.

### **Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary of the SBC**

**Mission Statement:** *Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary biblically educates God-called men and women to be and to make disciples of Jesus Christ throughout the world.*

### **Ministerial Scholarship Fund**

Monies to this line item are used to provide supplementary scholarship resources for ministerial students at the college and seminary levels.

### **Ministering to Ministers Foundation, Inc.**

**Mission Statement:** *The MTM Foundations seek to be advocates for clergy and their families in all faith groups who are experiencing personal or professional crisis due to deteriorating employment or congregation-clergy relationships.* Ministering to Ministers Foundation, Inc. serves individual ministers, their families and church organizations. It is an advocate for ministers and their families in all faith groups who are experiencing personal or professional crisis due to deteriorating employment or congregation-minister relationships. It works as a mediator to reunite minister and congregation when resolution of issues is needed. Ministering to Ministers strives to develop church-minister relations in the beginning stages of their relationship, promoting strong communication before conflict arises. The Foundation, a non-profit corporation, was created in 1994 by a group of ministers who had experienced involuntary separation from their congregations, along with interested laypersons. As they discussed their circumstances and needs, the mission of the Foundation began to take shape.

### **Missions Development**

This is a joint venture with Baptists and other Great Commission groups to help provide for construction, medical, and training needs while sharing the Good News.

### **Missions Relief**

This effort aids underdeveloped nations who are in desperate need of help. While meeting obvious physical needs, volunteers find many opportunities to share testimonies of salvation.

### **New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary of the SBC**

**Mission Statement:** *To equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.* Core Values include doctrinal integrity, spiritual vitality, characteristic excellence, and servant leadership.

### **North American Mission Board of the SBC**

**Vision Statement:** *We see a day when every person in every community in the United States and Canada will have the opportunity to hear the gospel, respond with faith in Christ, and participate in a New Testament fellowship of believers.*

**Mission Statement:** *The North American Mission Board exists to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, start New Testament congregations, minister to persons in the name of Christ, and assist churches in the United States and Canada in effectively performing these functions.*

### **Oak Hill Academy**

Oak Hill believes that all children have an instinctive need to learn, a natural curiosity, and a desire to do work of significance. Our intention is to combine the strongest possible academic atmosphere with a supportive, caring environment in an effort to develop self-confident, motivated students who have a love of learning. Our programs are designed to meet the individual needs and unique learning style of each student. Each child is an active participant in a learning process that stresses real-world connections and interdisciplinary experiences. Graduates leave Oak Hill Academy with a positive sense of self, a consideration for others, and a commitment to life-long learning.

### **Piankatank Conference Center and Camp**

This year-round facility exists to provide a Christ-centered place of respite. This is accomplished by providing pristine natural surroundings, comfortable lodging, quality food service, proper program space and equipment, and exciting recreational opportunities. The Camp Piankatank summer camp program exists to provide a diverse range of age appropriate programs for children and youth that encourage physical, spiritual, social and emotional growth within a safe and exciting Christ-centered environment.

### **Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary of the SBC**

Unwavering in its commitment to the sufficiency and authority of Scripture, Southeastern Seminary is driven by a biblical conviction that unless your ministry is established on the Word of God, you labor in vain. Southeastern is not your typical seminary. While boasting a capable faculty, Southeastern's academic prowess is exceeded only by its passion to turn this world upside down through the life-changing Gospel of Jesus Christ. Having served Southern Baptists for over 50 years, Southeastern was founded on God's Word for the purpose of fulfilling The Great Commission. At the dawn of a new millennium, Southeastern seeks to train a generation of men and women who are totally sold out to the Lordship of Christ and are willing to go anywhere and do anything for the sake of the Gospel.

### **Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives of the SBC**

The Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives is a worldwide center for the study of Baptist history. Operated by the Council of Seminary Presidents, the SBHLA is one of the major denominational collections in the nation and serves by assignment of the Southern Baptist Convention as the central depository and archives of SBC records.

### **Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary of the SBC**

The Southwestern Declaration on Academic and Theological Integrity: Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary has provided theological education for tens of thousands of persons seeking to follow Jesus in lives of ministry. Over 62,000 students later and nearly a century after our founding, it is eminently appropriate that we articulate our theological and educational commitments for the generations now before us. We have a clear mission strengthened by our guiding priorities and principles. Our educational mission is to serve Jesus Christ our Lord who has given us the ministry of teaching in his commission to disciple the nations. As the living word of God, he, by the Holy Spirit, has given us the written word of God, the inerrant Scriptures that we should preach, teach, and proclaim him in accordance with all that is written therein.

### **Support Services**

Support Services of the Virginia Baptist Mission Board includes a grouping of the following ministries: office of Assistant Executive Director/Director of The Ray and Ann Spence Network for Congregational Leadership; office of Assistant Executive Director/Chief Communications Officer; Support Services Team (which includes treasurer and business services); Information Technology Services; Camps and Conference Centers (CP support for Eagle Eyrie and Piankatank)

### **The Religious Herald**

The *Religious Herald* is the journal of the Baptist General Association of Virginia. It is published by the Religious Herald Publishing Association, Inc., a nonprofit corporation that operates under a charter issued in 1950 by the Corporation Commission of Virginia. Established in 1828 and privately owned and operated until 1950, as were most state denominational journals, the *Religious Herald* apparently is the oldest religious publication in America to have been published continuously under the same name and from the same city.

### **The Romany People of Southern Europe**

Romany people (Gypsies) are an unreached people group in Europe and in India. Virginia Baptists work with missionaries to this people group to introduce them to the Gospel in several countries of Europe and in South India.

### **The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary of the SBC**

**Mission Statement:** *Under the lordship of Jesus Christ, the mission of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary is to be totally committed to the Bible as the Word of God and to be a servant of the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention by training, educating, and preparing ministers of the gospel for more faithful service.* The seminary has been an innovator in theological education since its founding in 1859 in Greenville, S. C., as the first seminary of the Southern Baptist Convention. The school's pioneering legacy began in the visionary mind of James Petigru Boyce, the school's first president. Boyce dreamed of a school that would accept all God-called individuals for study regardless of their educational background.

### **Southwest Virginia Christian Leadership Network**

Based in Roanoke, Va., this program of the Baptist General Association of Virginia was launched to develop educational opportunities for bivocational ministers, church staff and lay people throughout Southwest Virginia and the Roanoke Valley.

### **Virginia Baptist Children's Home and Family Services**

The mission of Virginia Baptist Children's Home and Family Services is to manifest Christian love and demonstrate the value of each person by offering quality care and services to children, youth, and adults throughout Virginia, providing placement, residential, and supportive services to persons in need. In the 20-year life of VBCH&FS, the services it provides to children and families in need has continued to evolve to help those who need us *today*. Four distinct programs are in place to provide care to children and youth in need. Additionally, in 1992, the Children's Home ventured in a new direction, a ministry that serves adults – the Developmental Disabilities Ministry. With its expanded ministries – that now include many offices, DDM homes, foster families, alternative education schools, and other services – the Home bears little resemblance to the Baptist Orphanage of the 1890s. But throughout its history, despite shifts in focus, its goal has remained unchanged: to provide quality Christian care to people in need.

### **Virginia Baptist Foundation**

Founded in 1923, the Virginia Baptist Foundation was established by the Baptist General Association of Virginia to encourage and facilitate charitable giving to the many institutions, missions, and other ministries affiliated with the Baptist General Association of Virginia. It was one of the first foundations in Baptist history and provided the example after which numerous other denominations patterned similar foundations. Assets of the Foundation are in the millions and are held as trust funds and endowment funds for numerous Baptist causes, including the academies, colleges and universities, the Children's Homes, the Retirement Homes, churches and associations, the Cooperative Program, the State Missions Offering, Woman's Missionary Union, Baptist Men, Baptist Foundation, the *Religious Herald*, programs and retreat properties of the Baptist General Association, and seminaries and other Baptist institutions and ministries.

### **Virginia Baptist Historical Society**

Founded in 1876 by those interested in preserving Baptist history and by the Baptist General Association of Virginia, the Virginia Baptist Historical Society soon became a premier institution within the field of historical organizations in religious history. It early became a repository of Baptist congregational records and other tangible documents and artifacts of the Baptist story. Its collection became widely used by scholars, local church historians, denominational workers, pastors and students of Baptist history. Its facility, housed on the University of Richmond campus, was built through the aid of Woman's Missionary Union of Virginia and dedicated in 1955 as a memorial to Baptists who struggled to secure religious liberty. The Heritage Gallery opened in 1992 and is visited each year by hundreds of individuals and many church groups. The Gallery includes the 36-panel mural on Virginia Baptist history by artist Sidney E. King. Changing exhibits make the Gallery a favorite for returning visitors. The Society collects, preserves and makes available the records of Virginia Baptists.

### **Virginia Baptist Homes**

**Mission Statement:** *Virginia Baptist Homes, a ministry of Virginia Baptists, is committed to providing security, freedom, fulfillment, and personal growth to senior adults in a Christian atmosphere through continuing care retirement communities and other professional services.*

Virginia Baptist Homes (VBH) operates retirement communities in Culpeper, Newport News, and Richmond, and our fourth community, "The Glebe," is under development to serve the Roanoke Valley. VBH offers residential living in apartments and cottages, and health services through Assisted Living, Memory Support, and Nursing Care.

### **Virginia Intermont College**

Virginia Intermont College was founded by the Rev. J.R. Harrison, a Baptist minister who cherished the hope of establishing a school for the higher education of women. Today, the college's atmosphere is one of intellectual freedom, fostering a climate for an open exchange of ideas. Critical thinking, creativity, oral and written communication and cultural appreciation are central to the educational experience. Virginia Intermont College strives to create an atmosphere conducive to intellectual, spiritual, aesthetic and professional development.

### **Woman's Missionary Union of Virginia**

Woman's Missionary Union of Virginia functions as a missions organization believing that missions is the telling, communicating and acting of God's love as expressed in Christ to the people of the world in need that they may, through the words and ministries of those sent, find hope in Christ. WMUV has been incorporated as an autonomous Virginia Baptist entity since 1935. **CORE VALUES:** *Priesthood of the Believer; God's Call to Mission; Prayer for Missions; Giftedness of Women; Social and Moral Issues; Development of Leaders; Partnership with Christians Around the World and Diverse Organizational Models.*

## Cooperative Missions\* Comparison

What your CM dollars support through the BGAV and the SBCV

### BGAV SBCV

#### **Virginia Ministries (Section A)**

- ✓ Woman's Missionary Union of Virginia
- ✓ Religious Herald
- ✓ Virginia Baptist Foundation
- ✓ Baptist Extension Board
- ✓ Virginia Baptist Children's Home and Family Services
- ✓ Virginia Baptist Homes
- ✓ Children's Home of Virginia Baptists (Petersburg)
- ✓ Bluefield College
- ✓ Fork Union Military Academy
- ✓ Hargrave Military Academy
- ✓ John Leland Center for Theological Studies
- ✓ Oak Hill Academy
- ✓ Southwest Virginia Christian Leadership Network
- ✓ Virginia Intermont College
- ✓ Center for Baptist Heritage and Studies
- ✓ Virginia Baptist Historical Society
- ✓ Chaplain Service of the Churches of Virginia
- ✓ Virginia Partnership Missions
- ✓ Retired Ministers Supplement

#### **World Missions 1 and 2**

- ✓ ✓ SBC Executive Committee
- ✓ ✓ SBC International Mission Board
- ✓ ✓ SBC North American Mission Board
- ✓ ✓ SBC GuideStone Financial Resources (formerly Annuity Board)
- ✓ ✓ SBC Southern Seminary
- ✓ ✓ SBC Southwestern Seminary
- ✓ ✓ SBC New Orleans Seminary
- ✓ ✓ SBC Southeastern Seminary
- ✓ ✓ SBC Golden Gate Seminary
- ✓ ✓ SBC Midwestern Seminary
- ✓ ✓ SBC Historical Library and Archives
- ✓ ✓ SBC Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission
- ✓ Baptist World Alliance

#### **World Missions 2**

- ✓ Kingdom Advance New Mission Initiatives
- ✓ Missions Development
- ✓ Missions Relief
- ✓ The Romany People of Southern Europe
- ✓ Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond
- ✓ Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty
- ✓ Baptist Center for Ethics
- ✓ Associated Baptist Press
- ✓ Ministering to Ministers Foundation

#### **World Missions 3**

- ✓ Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

#### **Facilities**

- ✓ Eagle Eyrie Baptist Conference Center
- ✓ Piankatank Camp and Conference Center
- ✓ Baptist Student Ministries on Virginia campuses

(See BGAV giving options on page 5.)

\* Cooperative Missions is Virginia Baptists' long-standing commitment to the Cooperative Program.