FORGED BY CONVICTION: AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE SOUTHERN
BAPTIST CONSERVATIVES OF VIRGINIA

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BY
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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the courageous men and women of the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia (SBC of Virginia). Their love for the Lord Jesus Christ, unyielding commitment to the inerrancy of the Scriptures, passion for cooperative missions, zeal for evangelism, commitment to the local church, and dedication to church planting blazed a remarkable trail that gave birth to a new state convention. Their faith and courage in the face of overwhelming opposition is exemplary. May God's hand of blessing continue to be displayed through the cooperative efforts of the SBCV.
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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this project is to capture the history of the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia (SBCV). The information presented in this dissertation can benefit other state conventions engrossed in overwhelming bureaucracy. The SBCV also serves as a model assisting other state conventions in reclaiming their convention’s conservative theological moorings. The organization, structure, and example of the SBCV can help other state conventions in need of either restructuring or revitalization. This project reveals how God providentially guided the SBCV, and as a result of their faithfulness and efforts, the world and prevailing culture has been impacted by the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Abstract length: 106 words.
INTRODUCTION

The Controversy within the Southern Baptist Convention

The birth of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) took place in Augusta, Georgia on May 10, 1845. Its beginning was laced with controversy due to the steps taken by the Acting Board of the Triennial Convention in which slave holders were refused appointments as missionaries. This fact was realized when Georgia Baptists recommended James E. Reeve, a slaveholder, to the Home Mission Society to serve as a missionary in the south. Their refusal to appoint him led delegates (known today as messengers) from eight states and the District of Columbia to assemble in Augusta, Georgia in order to form a new convention.¹ According to the official Southern Baptist Convention’s website,

Since its organization in 1845 in Augusta, Georgia, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) has grown to over 16 million members who worship in more than 42,000 churches in the United States. Southern Baptists sponsor about 5,000 home missionaries serving the United States, Canada, Guam and the Caribbean, as well as sponsoring more than 5,000 foreign missionaries in 153 nations of the world.²

However, much of the controversy in the past thirty years has been fueled by theological differences, institutional bureaucracy, and educational infidelity.

Since 1845, the Southern Baptist Convention along with its educational institutions and agencies continued drifting towards theological liberalism. Through the teaching of higher criticism, also known as the historical-critical method, Darwin’s evolutionary theory (naturalism), rationalism, and liberal theology continued their


unrelenting assault on the authority of the Scriptures. The historical-critical method grew out of theories proposed by two nineteenth-century Old Testament German critics, K. H. Graf (1815-1869) and Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918). These two men theorized that four sources, known by the letters J-E-D-P, account for the first five books of the Bible. The men used the J-E-D-P theory to assign various dates to the Pentateuch. David O. Beale summarizes the problem with the J-E-D-P theory when he writes

In essence the historical-critical method assumes that the Bible is not a trustworthy and straightforward record which God revealed to "holy men" who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Peter 1:21). . . . [And] If one accepts the historical-critical method, then the historical accuracy of the Bible is out of the question; Moses could not have written the Pentateuch, even though Christ Himself ascribes it to him.3

This constant erosion became a crucial battle-cry for conservative Baptists. The uprising eventually ignited into a raging wildfire of criticism and controversy.

The average lay-person within Southern Baptist life was ignorant of the changes taking place within their institutions and national leadership. The challenge to biblical authority found a home within the hallowed halls of the Baptist seminaries and colleges. The educational system provided a fertile environment for liberal professors and seminary trustees to add credence to the notion that the Bible was simply a man-made book. As a result, the seminaries and colleges increasingly produced pastors and ministry leaders who questioned the accuracy of the Scriptures. In light of this liberal drift, it is interesting to note that the SBC operates several of the largest seminaries in the world, two to which, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (SWBTS) and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (SBTS), were originally "established as staunch,  

conservative institutions."4

One does not have to look far to find the scholarly and theologically conservative giants who resided at these two schools. "The four original faculty members [at SBTS] -- James P. Boyce, John A. Broadus, Basil Manly, Jr., and William Williams . . . stood adamantly for the full inspiration, total inerrancy, and absolute authority of the Scriptures."5 Benajah Harvey Carroll (1843-1914) was the founder of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. His writings depict a man who "held staunchly to the verbal, plenary inspiration, full inerrancy, and absolute authority of the complete Bible."6 However, it did not take long for each school to begin to welcome liberal speakers to its campus and to embrace liberal teaching within the classroom. Because the four other theological seminaries, New Orleans, Golden Gate, Midwestern, and Southeastern, were formed at a later date, they were all founded with a definite propensity toward theological liberalism.7

During the 1960's, the Elliott controversy along with several words and/or phrases within The Baptist Faith and Message gave credence to the fact that theological liberalism had taken root. In 1961, Broadman Press published a little book by Ralph H. Elliott entitled, The Message of Genesis. The book approached Genesis from an historical-critical point of view. Elliott espoused that "Genesis is not science. In the material attributed to J and P, the early writers were in no way trying to give a scientific or literal explanation. The stories are what Alan Richardson called parables – ‘parables

4 David O. Beale, 21.
5 Ibid., 22.
6 Ibid., 51.
7 Ibid., 59-83.
of nature and man in order to convey deep religious insight." It is also interesting to
note that the book was written at the suggestion of individuals at the Baptist Sunday
School Board. Opposition to the book was immediate and far reaching. The book was
used as a vehicle to clearly demonstrate how deep theological liberalism had penetrated
the ranks of Southern Baptist life, its leadership, and educational institutions. This
theological controversy would later prove to be a major crisis for the Southern Baptist
Convention.

The wording of *The Baptist Faith and Message* (1963) continued to provide a
convenient loop-hole for liberals. Two statements in Article One, Scripture, "without any
mixture of error, for its matter [and the] criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is
Jesus Christ," were viewed by some as ambiguous terms. Even though the 1963
Convention adopted a revised *Baptist Faith and Message*, the "historical-critical method
continued to be utilized in many Southern Baptist seminaries and universities.

Denominationalism lost in public but prevailed in private." During the 1970's the
situation intensified as conservatives raised more and more concern regarding theological
issues.

The most damaging piece of information that exposed the depth of liberalism
within the schools was a Master of Divinity thesis written by Noel Wesley Hollyfield in
1976. The chart below details the impact that liberal theology was having upon students
at Southern Seminary. The thesis concluded that the longer a student remained at

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9 *The Baptist Faith and Message*, Article 1, adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention on 9 May
1963.

1990), 72.
Southern Seminary the more likely he was to reject the basic fundamentals of the faith like the virgin birth, miracles, and the deity of Christ.

### Changing Views of Southern Seminary Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Belief</th>
<th>Diploma Students</th>
<th>MDiv 1st yr</th>
<th>MDiv final yr</th>
<th>Ph.D.-Th.M. Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I know God really exists: I have no doubts about it.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus is the Divine Son of God: I have no doubt about it.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe the miracles happened as the Bible said they did.</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus was born of a virgin: completely true.</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief in Jesus Christ as Savior: absolutely necessary.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hollyfield's thesis gave conservatives another piece of solid evidence that liberalism was indeed eroding the faith of many. Further investigation revealed how serious and deep the blatant apostasy extended within the schools.

Through a coalition of conservative men like Judge Paul Pressler, Paige Patterson, and Adrian Rogers, a strategy was formulated to once again return the Southern Baptist Convention, its agencies, and educational institutions to their conservative theological roots. During an interview with Reverend Howard Baldwin, he summed up the situation by stating:

> There was a change taking place in the Southern Baptist Convention. It had drifted along for so many years. They had the old school in place. When Paige Patterson came along, and Judge Pressler at the conference in New Orleans, they

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11 Paul Pressler, 149.
said something needs to change. The change was needed because theological education was drifting towards theological liberalism. Paige Patterson and Judge Pressler said this needs to change. So the number one problem was the drift toward theological liberalism in our seminaries. Southwestern was the most conservative. Southeastern was probably the most liberal. Southern was right behind. Golden Gate was still pretty much conservative. Midwestern had drifted toward theological liberalism. So change needed to happen. Paige Patterson had the background theologically. Judge Pressler knew how to do it politically because he was a lawyer, and he was a judge too. So they brought these two ideas. They decided that the only way to change the Southern Baptist Convention and to change the seminaries was to elect a president of the Southern Baptist Convention who was conservative, and who would take the heat and appoint people that were conservative for the boards and agencies. And then they would put up nominations for conservatives from the states that would make a difference in appointing people and nominating people who were conservatives to the Board of Trustees for these institutions.\textsuperscript{12}

Nancy Tatom Ammerman, a liberal sociologist, concurs with Baldwin's assessment when she writes that "Their aim was to control the appointment process by which trustees are nominated so that, in turn, conservative trustees could purge the denomination of liberalism."\textsuperscript{13}

In 1978, after a long evening's discussion with W. A. Criswell, longtime pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas, Judge Paul Pressler, Paige Patterson, and Jerry Vines set in motion the practical steps for the conservative resurgence. Dr. Criswell offered valuable counsel by giving the follow advice:

\begin{quote}
If you want to be successful, you must do two things. You must have presidents elected who not only are theologically conservative, but who will use their power as president to appoint other like-minded persons who desire to see change made. Secondly, you must get to know people throughout the United States so that a president will have a reservoir of people from whom to make appointments in each state.\textsuperscript{14}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{12} Howard Baldwin, interviewed by Jeffrey R. Pinder, Pinder Home, Amelia, Virginia, July 1, 2009.


\textsuperscript{14} Paul Pressler, 95.
Pressler and Patterson immediately began crisscrossing the country meeting with conservative pastors and people motivating them to attend the annual meetings in an effort to be a voice for change.

The conservatives targeted the 1979 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Houston, Texas, to begin their quest for change. A grass-roots movement of conservative messengers was poised to engage the struggle and take back the convention by electing a conservative president. But who would be the right man for this defining moment? A straw poll taken by conservatives days before the election of the president pointed to one man, Dr. Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee. Dr. Rogers initially refused to allow his name to be placed into nomination. His reluctance was no match for the power of God and the prayers of His people. With encouragement from several respected spiritual giants, including his wife, Dr. Rogers graciously heeded the call and was soon elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention. Walter B. Shurden and Randy Shepley remember that "On the first day of the SBC meeting that year messengers to the convention elected Adrian Rogers as president on the first ballot with 51.36% of the vote, over five other candidates."

In the aftermath of the convention proceedings, the conservative resurgence faced an uphill battle. The struggle only intensified as both conservatives and liberals used political posturing and media outlets to advance their cause. The controversy gained instant media coverage. Shurden and Shepley stated that "In [the early] phase of the struggle almost every Baptist state editor editorialized against the fundamentalists while the denominational bureaucracy was solidly and silently against the Pressler-Patterson

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The process of returning the Southern Baptist Convention to its original conservative theological foundation would span a period of more than ten years. The concept was good in theory. However, the entire process hinged on electing, in succession, conservative presidents who would use their appointive power to purge the boards of those who upheld and promoted liberal ideology.

The conservative movement continued to gain momentum. At the 1980 convention in St. Louis, Missouri, Adrian Rogers declined to run for a second term, and messengers elected Bailey Smith on the first ballot. His fiery personality and strong outspoken stand on biblical inerrancy thrust the conservative moment forward. Messengers also passed a strong resolution on biblical inerrancy and the infallibility of the original manuscripts. The resolution required that all employees (faculty and staff), trustees, and any institutions affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention sign a document in agreement to such a statement.¹⁷

Later that same year, Judge Pressler once again attracted attention from liberals within the convention. His statements resonated throughout the convention. In a passionate speech delivered at Old Forest Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Virginia, Pressler's words drew strong criticism. In an attempt to demonstrate where the power and control lay within the Southern Baptist Convention, he stated that "We have been fighting battles without knowing what the war is all about. We have not been effective because we have not gotten to the root of the problem. . . . The life blood of the Southern Baptist

¹⁶ Ibid., 5.
Convention is the trustees. We need to go for the jugular--we need to go for trustees."

The first round of conservative trustee nominations came at the 1981 SBC annual meeting in Los Angeles, California. Moderates were not surprised to see the slate of names containing only conservative appointments. Through political maneuvering, moderates (a self-given term) were able to successfully replace several of the conservative appointments with moderates. Their candidate for the presidency failed to garner conservative votes. Bailey Smith was reelected as SBC president with over 60% of the vote.

With each passing year, the conservative resurgence continued to gain strength as new conservative appointments flooded the trustee boards. The convention in New Orleans, Louisiana (1982) provided conservatives with a fourth decisive victory. At this meeting in 1982, Jimmy Draper was elected president by a 57 to 43 percent margin over Southern Baptist statesman Duke McCall. Once again, during the business session when the slate of trustee nominations was presented, moderates were only successful at replacing three conservative names with three moderate candidates. The winds of time had indeed begun to favor the conservative movement.

Records indicate that the least disruptive convention during the 1980's was the 1983 SBC meeting held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Jimmy Draper was re-elected as president with no opposition from the liberal constituency. However, the undercurrent of unrest and dissatisfaction among moderates quickly surfaced as organizational efforts took dead aim at impeding the conservative thrust. An issue that did generate significant

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debate in the fall state conventions was the ordination of women.  

The 1984 Southern Baptist Convention in Kansas City, Missouri opened in a blistering fashion as moderates immediately challenged the order of business. Additionally, challenges came when the Committee on Boards brought their own recommendations. A motion to replace many of the names was defeated. Strong resolutions against abortion, gambling, secular humanism, and the role of women in the ministry were adopted. In the face of the embroiled controversies, Charles Stanley was elected on the first ballot. From this moment forward, executives and seminary presidents weighed in on the debate. The battle for the future of the SBC had reached a serious juncture.

As tensions mounted, the emotional turmoil reached new heights. The 1985 annual SBC meeting in Dallas, Texas witnessed record breaking crowds. Convention records reveal an historic messenger count of 45,519. The conservatives continued to insist that the controversy was theological while those in the moderate camp maintained that the debate centered on political control. "The most significant decision at the Southern Baptist Convention in Dallas, Texas, was the adoption of Bill Hickem and Franklin Paschall's motion to create a special committee that would eventually be known as the Peace Committee." The twenty-two member committee was comprised of both conservatives and liberals, and it was chaired by Charles Fuller. Their task was "to determine the source of the controversies in the Convention, and make findings and

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recommendations regarding these controversies." Two years later, at the 1987 annual meeting in St. Louis, Missouri, they concluded that the primary source of debate within the SBC was "theological, especially [concerning] the nature and the authority of the Bible." The Peace Committee not only found theological diversity within the seminaries, they also reported that both sides were "guilty of political activities and of using 'intemperate, inflammatory and unguarded language.'" The findings added fuel to the conservative movement. The messengers voted by an overwhelming majority to adopt the report, and elect Adrian Rogers as the new SBC president. St. Louis proved to be a place of crushing defeat for moderates.

Those opposed to the Conservative Moment and the Peace Committee's findings cried foul to such a notion. In a book entitled, The New SBC: Fundamentalism's Impact on the Southern Baptist Convention, Grady C. Cothen laments that

> The objective of the group and its guiding philosophy is control. The method is power and coercion. The spirit is critical and censorious of all who disagree. The attitude toward other Christians is disdain and judgment. The ethic is established by vote of the majority. The mantra is inerrancy and anti-abortion. The consuming passion is domination. . . The manifest intent was to take control of the SBC.

The conclusions presented by the Peace Committee and adopted by the messengers at the 1987 SBC annual meeting in St. Louis, Missouri, nullified such statements.

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22 Jerry Sutton, 6.


The volatility within the convention continued. Another ferocious battle for the presidency occurred at the 1988 SBC annual meeting in San Antonio, Texas. At this meeting, the Peace Committee was formally disbanded, and conservatives were able to elect Jerry Vines as president by a razor thin margin (50.50%). The issue that ignited the most controversy came in response to a resolution on the priesthood of the believer, introduced by the chairman of the Resolution Committee Jerry Sutton. "In response to the adoption of this resolution, Randall Lolley, professor at SEBTS, led a protest march to the Alamo where he burned the resolution and argued that it was one of the most un-Baptist things ever adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention."

In the years that followed, the conservative leadership continued to transform the SBC along with its agencies and seminaries. Since the election of Adrian Rogers in 1979, the conservatives won every presidency over moderate challengers. Eventually, moderates were removed from leadership while others were overlooked for leadership positions within the SBC. Shut out of the appointment and nomination process, key moderate leaders like Duke McCall, Cecil Sherman, Grady Cothen, and others, entertained a new strategy for distributing Cooperative Program funds from each of their churches.

In 1990, a new funding mechanism received enthusiastic support from over two thousand moderates attending a meeting in Atlanta, Georgia. The Baptist Cooperative Missions Program, Incorporated, as it was called, eventually led to the establishment of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in 1991. Daniel Vestal was charged with the

25 Jerry Sutton, 189.
responsibility of developing a permanent fellowship. Moderates had taken their first steps toward distancing themselves from the Southern Baptist Convention.26

The 1990's brought sweeping changes. The trustee boards were now entirely in the hands of the conservatives. The strategy had worked. Many of the liberal seminary presidents and professors simply resigned, only three people were actually fired. The schools, agencies, and leadership vowed allegiance to doctrinal integrity, biblical inerrancy, and infallibility. The fallout from the conservative resurgence also had a dramatic impact on the state conventions. One in particular was the Baptist General Association of Virginia.

26 Jerry Sutton, 201-205.
Chapter One
The Origin of the SBCV Fellowship

As the national SBC controversy raged on, Southern Baptists in Virginia took note. Throughout the 1980's the conservative resurgence faced an uphill battle among the moderate leadership within the Baptist General Association of Virginia (BGAV). At the national level, the trustee boards and all SBC entities began falling into the hands of conservative leadership. Conservative victories eventually led to personnel and policy changes. "[Liberals] realized they could not prevail in SBC elections. Therefore, they began to establish alternative organizations and [tried] to turn away from the SBC those state conventions where they were strong, notably Virginia, the most liberal SBC state."

The primary vehicle for communicating with Southern Baptists in Virginia was the Religious Herald. Those dissatisfied with the SBC's conservative resurgence looked to the Religious Herald for answers. With its moderate stance and the power of political persuasion, the Religious Herald was successful at capturing the hearts and ears of many Virginia Baptists. It was abundantly clear that one of the most powerful positions within the BGAV organization was the editor of the Religious Herald. In the same way that moderates felt disenfranchised from the SBC, conservatives in Virginia were excluded from leadership positions within the BGAV organization. The exclusion from state leadership positions was viewed by conservatives as a reprimand for the fundamental changes within the SBC trustee boards and its entities.

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Tommy Taylor, pastor of London Bridge Baptist Church in Virginia Beach, Virginia, moved to Virginia during the spring of 1979. It did not take long for him to discover just how far Southern Baptists in Virginia had drifted towards liberalism. In order to preserve his conservative heritage, pastor Taylor quickly made friends with several other like-minded pastors. The relationships fostered with these pastors proved to be rewarding and indispensable. However, in time, this fledgling group of pastors became the backbone that would eventually blaze into a conservative movement. Their impact on Virginia Baptists sent tremors throughout the BGAV and Virginia Baptists.

In the mid-to-late 1980's, there were only a handful of known conservative pastors. It has often been said that "they would meet for fellowship and there were so few of them that they could fit into a phone booth." David Johnson concurs when he states that "You know they talk about the telephone booth. And to be frank with you, going back to Art Ballard’s days, it was a telephone booth. I mean there were very few of us. So it wasn’t as if we had a massive number of people to communicate with." The phone booth continued to expand as more and more conservative pastors and laymen began to understand the liberal bent of the BGAV's leadership.

In spite of their efforts to change the course of the BGAV, the annual meetings became a source of frustration. Conservatives felt isolated, overwhelmed, and always outnumbered. During an interview with Dr. Kelly Burris, Kempsville Baptist Church, Virginia Beach, Virginia, Dr. Burris clearly recalls his first BGAV annual meeting. He

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29 David Johnson, Interviewed by Jeffrey R. Pinder, in an office at Rileyville Baptist Church, Rileyville, Virginia, July 15, 2009.
commented by saying, "I couldn’t believe some of the things I was [hearing]. And I felt like a lone ranger. I felt like that there were probably no other conservatives around here." Howard Baldwin also remembers how "the liberals were very strong and well organized. In fact the Executive Director at the time commented and said, 'The moderates are just better organized than you guys are. So if you are going to make a difference, you need to be better organized.'” Disappointment and disillusionment continued to plague conservative Baptists.

Conservatives needed a tool for communicating their conservative message to other pastors, congregations, and interested lay-people. One man single-handedly rose to such an occasion and published Virginia's first conservative newspaper. The first issue of *The Baptist Banner* (The Banner) was released in February 1988. This overtly conservative newspaper was founded and edited by T. C. Pinckney of Alexandria, VA. The purpose of The Banner is to "inform its readers and in particular Virginia Baptists concerning the issues and events related to Baptist life from a biblically conservative perspective. It is presented with the conviction that an informed Christian will be better equipped to reach Christ-honoring decisions through the leading of the Holy Spirit." Through *The Banner*, solid biblical information regarding events and political issues was transmitted to both conservative clergy and laity alike.

While *The Banner* touted the need for a conservative resurgence in Virginia, the BGAV leadership and *Religious Herald* were encouraging Virginia Baptists to oppose

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many of the changes taking place at the national level. Many conservative men and pastors such as Tommy Taylor, Art Ballard, Bob Melvin, Doyle Chauncey, Vander Warner, David Johnson, Howard Baldwin (evangelist), and T. C. Pinckney (layman), just to name a few, struggled with the BGAV's continued resistance to the changes taking place within the SBC. The inerrancy debate was about to cause the issue to rise to a whole new level of political maneuvering and verbal bashing.

The BGAV's annual meetings produced one defeat after another for conservatives on both political and social issues. Issues regarding abortion, homosexuality, and the role of women in ministry were all troubling to conservative Baptists in Virginia. Other points of contention were over budget categories that gave money directly to liberal causes and the defunding of SBC entities. These included ministries such as the University of Richmond, the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, The Religious Herald, School of Pastoral Care (Baptist Hospital in Lynchburg which performs abortions), and the Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

The most pressing issue for Virginia conservatives was biblical inerrancy. The moderate BGAV leadership continued to assert that the decade struggle within the SBC was merely an issue regarding a grab for political power by the conservatives. However, the conclusions presented by the Peace Committee and adopted by the messengers at the 1987 Annual Convention strongly revealed that the battle was first and foremost a theological issue. The official SBC records state that

We, as a Peace Committee, have found that most Southern Baptists see "truth without any mixture of error for its matter" as meaning, for example, that

(1) They believe in direct creation of mankind and therefore believe Adam and Eve were real persons.
(2) They believe the named authors did indeed write the Biblical books attributed to them by those books.
(3) They believe the miracles described in Scriptures did indeed occur as supernatural events in history.
(4) They believe that the historical narratives given by Biblical authors are indeed accurate and reliable as given by those authors.

We call upon Southern Baptist institutions to recognize the great number of Southern Baptists who believe this interpretation of our confessional statement and, in the future, to build their professional staffs and faculties from those who clearly reflect such dominant convictions and beliefs held by Southern Baptists at large.\(^3\)

The findings by the committee clearly revealed that the conflict was over the way one interpreted the Bible. Those in charge of the Virginia state convention refused to accept the findings of the Peace Committee even though the group was well comprised of both moderates and conservatives.

Nervous anxiety lay like a thick ominous cloud over Southern Baptists in Virginia. In an open letter dated September 8, 1987, evangelist Howard Baldwin addresses all Southern Baptist churches in Virginia and captures the feelings of many conservatives when he writes that

The Peace Report adopted at our recent Southern Baptist Convention may not be all that everyone could have envisioned it to be, but in fairness we should give it a try. Virginia Baptists have been cast in the light by many as a state filled with the most liberal element in the Convention. Frankly as a native-born Virginian and an evangelist I have resented that type-casting. But when letters are sent out like the one enclosed, I fear that there may be a great deal of truth in what others say about us here in Virginia.

Over the last seventeen years I have been in every area of this state in revivals. Frankly, I have found that our churches are basically conservative, the pastors love the Lord and believe the Bible. Our state conventions do not always reflect the grassroots concerns of Virginia Baptists. Could it be that the conservatives have been so frustrated over the years at the state Baptist Conventions that we no longer attend? Do we feel so frustrated that we have

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determined that our time is better spent in the work of our local churches than attending the annual meeting? I have certainly felt this way many, many times.\textsuperscript{34}

The letter goes on to encourage Virginia Baptists to cooperation, missions, and evangelism.

With the election of Jerry Vines in 1988 to the SBC presidency, the conservative leadership began to lay the groundwork for the convention's future. As the moderate voice diminished among national leadership, the newly elected president of the BGAV, Mrs. Jean Woodward, appointed a nine-member, two-year Task Force to study the denominational crisis and send a "Memorial" to the 1989 Southern Baptist Convention. The messengers to the BGAV Annual Meeting on November 16, 1988 overwhelmingly supported this recommendation. The Memorial was the first example of the BGAV limiting its giving to the SBC.

As the Southern Baptist Convention began to flex its conservative muscle, the Baptist General Association of Virginia voiced its opposition. However, a new controversy was being closely monitored by the BGAV leadership. The storm of debate centered on a proposed merger between the Public Affairs Committee and the Christian Life Commission. The merger would ultimately result in the ties being severed between the Baptist Joint Committee for Public Affairs and the SBC. The BGAV was so strongly opposed to such a move that it made plans to authorize the "Budget Committee" to recommend appropriate action to the Virginia Baptist General Board to assure reasonable

\textsuperscript{34} Howard Baldwin, letter to Virginia Baptist churches, September 8, 1987.
financial support of the (BJC) by Virginia Baptists' should SBC funding for the BJC be cut."

The 1988 BGAV annual meeting gave further evidence that the convention was moving away from the SBC with regard to missions and Cooperative Program support when it stated that "we . . . believe the terms of the partnership [with the SBC] should be renegotiated to allow more direct communication, accountability, and flexibility regarding matters of conscience. If negotiations fail, the BGAV will be forced to consider making its own allocations through the SBC Executive Committee to SBC causes." These inflammatory statements, along with the President's Task Force On the Denominational Crisis, further heightened division and dissension among Virginia Baptists.

The newly commissioned President's Task Force On the Denominational Crisis was hard at work studying the BGAV's relationship to the SBC. The nine member Task Force was also responsible for representing the BGAV in official discussions with the SBC. The committee decided to send a Memorial (petition) to the Administrative and Convention Arrangements Subcommittee of the SBC Executive Committee on February 21, 1989 for their consideration. The Task Force was not happy with the response from Nashville. Therefore, it formally presented the Memorial from the floor at the 1989 Southern Baptist Convention in Las Vegas, Nevada hoping to gain support for their

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cause. It is interesting to note that the nine-member committee did not include a single conservative member.

During the summer of 1989, a series of eleven articles appeared in the *Religious Herald* under the heading, *On These Truths We Stand*. The articles covered a myriad of topics from *The Centrality of Christ* to *Freedom and Cooperation*. According to John Upton, Executive Director of the BGAV (2001 to the present), the articles brought "clarity to the issues as well as the challenge to remain faithful and true to the heritage that is ours to sustain."37 In reality, the articles caused further division and distrust among Virginia Baptists. The articles also revealed the crafty language and the persuasive power of the liberal pen.

Conservatives had much to fear with the direction that the BGAV leadership was taking the convention. During the BGAV annual meeting held in Salem, Virginia on November 14-15, 1989, the report offered by the President's Task Force On the Denominational Crisis suggested that "now is the time to search for new ways of working with fellow Baptists . . . [and] in order to maintain integrity of cooperation, new styles of relating must begin to be developed."38 The report recommended that the messengers nominate two people from the BGAV and offer those names as suggestions to the SBC President for consideration as Virginia members of the SBC Committee on Committees.

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Even though Dr. Charles Fuller, First Baptist Church, Roanoke, Virginia, cautioned the messengers to be very careful regarding this motion, it passed overwhelmingly.\textsuperscript{39}

The vast difference between the moderates and conservatives was poignantly obvious when messenger Paige Bowman of First Baptist Church, Woodstock, Virginia introduced a motion recommending that the BGAV incorporate the Sanctity of Human Life Sunday as a regular date on its annual calendar of observances. The motion revealed how deeply divided the convention was on the issue of life. Neither a voice vote nor a standing vote could decide the issue. Later, after a ballot vote was taken, the count revealed that the motion was defeated by a slim margin of 94 votes (929 against and 835 affirmative). Conservatives were extremely disheartened to see the BGAV demonstrate a disregard for life.\textsuperscript{40}

It was very difficult for conservative pastors to impede the direction of the BGAV individually. However, one man who understood how conservative battles were being won at the national level and how Virginia conservatives could change the direction of the state convention decided to get involved. T. C. Pinckney encouraged the fledgling group of conservative pastors and lay-people to meet during the lunch breaks at the BGAV annual meetings. His organizational and administrative skills proved to be indispensable.

The annual meetings offered little for conservative Baptists who held to an infallible Bible. Many simply refused to attend. In an effort to counteract the negative trend, the small band of conservatives decided to launch a Bible Conference on the

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 73, 155.

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 164.
Monday before the BGAV annual meeting. The first annual Virginia Baptist Bible Conference took place on Monday evening, November 13, 1989 in the ballroom of the Roanoke/Salem Airport Sheraton. The very first keynote speaker was Dr. Jimmy Draper, past president of the Southern Baptist Convention. The Bible Conference provided a safe-haven for conservative messengers, and an opportunity to exalt Christ while being fed spiritually.

During the luncheon meetings and through The Banner, Pinckney communicated the need for churches to send their full slate of messengers to the BGAV’s annual meeting. The situation was openly addressed in an article published in The Banner on August 1989 entitled, "Virginia Baptist Bible Conference." The clarion call resounded with urgency. The article stated that

For a number of years many conservative Virginia Baptists have not attended the annual BGAV convention in November. Perhaps the primary reason has been a feeling of isolation, frustration, and futility. Conservative views have been repeatedly ignored, flouted, and rebuked. Conservative pastors have been pressured to conform to the state leadership's line and included in events largely only to the extent they did conform or at least kept quiet about their theological beliefs and the action policies springing from those beliefs. Met with reactions varying from bemused toleration at best and extending as far as ridicule and mischief making at worst, it is no wonder conservative representation at state conventions has dwindled to a faithful but masochistic remnant.

This situation must change. For the last three years we have met at a conservative luncheon on Tuesday of the BGAV convention, and this meeting has grown from around 50 in 1986 to 170 in 1988. 41

If conservatives were serious about changing the direction of the BGAV, then large groups of messengers needed to consistently attend the November annual meetings.

Several of the pastors reminisced about the powerful influence and leadership that Pinckney provided:

T.C. Pinckney is the number one person who was there in the forefront. He was getting the conservative pastors together talking.\textsuperscript{42}

God raised up T.C. And T.C. fundamentally became our leader. He really did. I mean, liberals painted him as a little man with red horns and pitchfork, you know.\textsuperscript{43}

T.C. was the core individual right there because he, he’s the one that kind of helped rallied us together and not just rallied, I guess you could say administratively he knew how to put us in certain areas [geographically]. We were in certain areas [geographically], and through him we began to communicate what we were trying to do.\textsuperscript{44}

T. C. Pinckney was a key player in organizing both conservative pastors and lay-people around commonly-held biblical beliefs. The \textit{Banner} became the tool for communicating conservative issues with conservative Virginia Baptists, and the direction that the moderate leadership was taking the BGAV convention.

As the decade of the 80's drew to a close, the BGAV continued to plunge headlong into liberalism. The 1990's would bear witness to the formation of the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia Fellowship (SBCV), the emergence of a national moderate-liberal organization known as the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF), a new Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, and eventually the birth of a new state convention. Additionally, the 167th Annual Meeting of the BGAV held in Richmond, Virginia, November 13-14, 1990, exposed the intent of the moderate faction. Financial shifts in the budget along with the report from the Committee on the Denominational Crisis were a precursor to the flood of debate that ensued. A "new style of relating" had indeed begun.

\textsuperscript{42} Howard Baldwin, interview.

\textsuperscript{43} David Johnson, interview.

\textsuperscript{44} Kelly Burris, interview.
Messengers flooded the Richmond Centre to prepare for battle. The seemingly minor changes to the budget ignited a firestorm of criticism. The clerk for the BGAV documented a record attendance of 4,646 messengers.\textsuperscript{45} Conservative messengers were already unhappy with the 62/38 distribution plan. They argued that the percentage of money given to the SBC Cooperative Program (38\%) and the amount retained within the state (62\%) was being compromised. The ever-enlarging bureaucracy and the new budget proposal threatened to decrease the amount of money received by the Executive Committee. Thus, the Cooperative Program would suffer. This did not sit well with many Virginia Baptists.

The proposed budget for 1991 reflected a distinct moderate preference. Four new line items (\textit{Associated Baptist Press}, Theological Education Reserve, Partnership Missions, and Contingency) were added to the budget under the umbrella of World Mission Causes. These non-SBC causes presented a new challenge for conservative Baptists. The \textit{Associated Baptist Press} came into existence after two prominent leaders, Al Shackleford and Dan Martin, left the SBC \textit{Baptist Press}. It was established by liberal Baptists to directly compete with the \textit{Baptist Press}. The new BGAV budget intended to partner with the organization by giving them sixty thousand dollars.

Three additional line items (Theological Education Reserve, Partnership Missions, and Contingency) were added to the budget without initial guidelines. Once approved, the Virginia Baptist General Board would be free to establish its own rules for the use and distribution of these funds. Additionally, the hundred thousand dollars for

theological education was intended as seed money for starting a new liberal seminary. In the 1990 budget, the Virginia Partnership received forty thousand dollars. However, in the 1991 budget, the category was moved to the World Mission Causes and slated to receive $134,150. The concerns were that the money would be used to promote liberal causes outside of Virginia. Furthermore, the fifty thousand dollars "Contingency" fund was nothing more than a blatant attempt to use money to further the liberal agenda. The battle for Virginia was about to take on a whole new dimension.46

No one was surprised by the BGAV's move to financially support the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. No sooner had the SBC decided to defund this agency, than the BGAV increased its giving to the organization by 77.73%. The additional $59,077 allotment clearly displayed its desire to strengthen ties with the Baptist Joint Committee. In the new budget structure, the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs appears under a "Missions Designated" column. The line item was transferred from the "Shared Ministries" under the "Cooperative Missions in Virginia" to "World Mission." Thus, this clever move by the Virginia Baptist General Board simply appeared to messengers as another mission's endeavor. Conservatives were powerless to stop the budget proceedings.

In addition to the financial and categorical shifts in the 1991 budget, conservatives were also concerned regarding a thirty-three percent increase to the Americans United for Separation of Church and State. Founded in 1947, this leftwing liberal organization has a proven track record of being an enemy of conservative

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Christianity. Is it any wonder why Virginia Baptists were outraged with their money going to support such an anti-Christian group? Another significant budget proposal which fueled controversy centered in an 853.95% increase to the Baptist World Alliance, from $12,509 in 1990 to $106,821 in 1991. As conservatives voiced opposition, their cries were either drowned out or basically ignored.

The 1991 budget was filled with clever and creative accounting strategies. T. C. Pinckney captures the budget maneuvering by stating that "The same financial sleight of hand that took place in the FY 1990 budget is multiplied in the FY 1991 BGAV budget." For instance, the overall budget of sixteen million three hundred thousand dollars would not result in a 62/38 split between the state and the national convention. With the passage of the new budget, churches were given three plans for channeling Cooperative Program gifts. In the new "Virginia Budget Plan" only seventeen percent would be forwarded to the Executive Committee of the SBC. Even the "Traditional Cooperative Plan" (62/38) would experience a reduction. However, a third plan allowed each church to design their own Cooperative Program giving strategy. The impact was immediate and far reaching.

As of the 1990 budget, the $660,000 "SBC Annuity/Protection Plan" was a separate line item from the state budget and therefore not subject to the 62/38 split. The threat to punish the SBC through the Cooperative Program giving was now a reality. Pinckney concurs when he writes that "[the liberals] may hope that by inserting these sizable amounts for missions the new plan will be accepted and then in future years they
can continue to reduce money going to the SBC. Therefore, conservative churches were encouraged to design their own plan allowing for only seventeen percent to stay in the state and eighty-three percent to be sent to the SBC Cooperative Program. Furthermore, the Treasurer of the BGAV had to be notified in writing of any giving pattern changes by a local church. The budget controversy was only a symptom of deeper theological issues.

The registration booth was overwhelmed by the sheer number of messengers that descended on the Richmond Centre. At one point "there were 1,000 persons waiting to register and already the registration officials were out of ballots." Consequently, on several occasions during the business proceedings, attempts were made by conservatives to add the Sanctity of Human Life Sunday to the annual list of calendar observances. Each time the amendment failed. However, the messengers did manage to pass a resolution against off-track betting. Robert Eiban of Worsham Baptist Church commented that "it is a sad day to take a stand against off-track betting but not one on abortion." The issue of life became one of the dividing lines for Virginia Baptists.

In a move that would further irritate conservatives, the Committee on Denominational Crisis gave its report and made a recommendation in the form of a motion. The recommendation reads:

We recommend that the General Association authorize the 1991 president to appoint a special committee on denominational relationships to serve for three years. We suggest that nine persons be appointed. The committee's assignment is to inform Virginia Baptists about the issues and circumstances which affect

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48 Ibid.

49 Virginia Baptist Annual, 122.

50 Ibid., 152.
our cooperation with the Southern Baptist Convention and other Baptist bodies. It may, from time to time, address the churches, associations, agencies and institutions within the Virginia Baptist fellowship about the possibilities of improved mutual relationships.51 Debate followed with plaintiffs from both sides voicing their options. Howard Baldwin of Bethany Place Baptist Church suggested that the committee be made up of both moderates and conservatives. In the end, the motion passed in its original form giving the president sole power to elect the committee.

The motion to adopt the budget came late on Tuesday morning. Immediately, challenges were made to the new line items and various category transfers within the budget. The debate extended well into the afternoon session. Passionate pleas to amend or remove items from the budget were met with stiff opposition. All attempts failed to halt the passage of the budget. Furthermore, a messenger confirmed suspicions that liberals had plans for a new seminary when she commented that "the Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond is in the planning stages."52 The deliberate diverting of funds for both non-SBC and liberal causes continued to outrage conservatives. The change in the budget allotments would eventually have a profound impact on Virginia's contributions to the Cooperative Program.

The increasing pressure to conform to BGAV’s moderate-liberal agenda promoted by the current leadership was a catalyst that began to create a need for a new venue for Virginia conservatives. Many of them were overshadowed with a deep sense of discouragement and isolation. However, the battle for biblical inerrancy remained at the

51 Ibid., 123.
52 Ibid., 132.
forefront of the debate. Furthermore, the impact of the Virginia Baptist Bible Conference was beginning to take root. The conference's steady growth highlighted by nationally known speakers was viewed by the moderate leadership as a vehicle for propagating the conservative voice, increasing their messenger count, and as an attempt to change the direction of the BGAV. The "phone booth" fellowship of conservative pastors that began in 1985 was expanding as the fight for conservative biblical values reached an all-time high.

By 1991, it seemed that moderates had given up hope of ever winning at the national level. Consequently, the official formation of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) provided an outlet for moderates who were frustrated with the SBC. Virginia moderate pastors as well as BGAV leaders lent their voices to the CBF's interim steering committee. They also enthusiastically embraced the ideological and theological diversities espoused by the group. This new mission delivery system was the first step toward a marked schism within the SBC. As a result, this new way of relating only served to heighten the moderate-conservative controversy in Virginia.

At the heart of much of the debate was a fundamental difference of biblical interpretation. Thus, essential elements such as education, missions, the task of the pastor, and the role of women in ministry are all subject to the way in which one interprets the Bible. These prevailing issues highlighted the 1991 BGAV annual meeting held on November 12-13 in the Salem Civic Center in Salem, Virginia. Messengers faced a barrage of issues ranging from supporting a new seminary to an amendment to the constitution. An impasse loomed in the distance. However, for the first time, conservatives were prepared to meet the challenge of many of the budget changes.
The morning session erupted into a storm of disagreement when Raymond L. Spence moved the adoption of two recommendations. The first recommendation would "authorize the Treasurer to receive and disburse funds that are designated by churches to Cooperative Missions, Incorporated (the financial entity of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.)."\textsuperscript{53} Despite cries from conservatives that the CBF was a new convention directly competing with the SBC, the recommendation passed. James Slatton captured the moderate mindset when he stated that "the vast majority of the churches sending funds to the CBF are trying to make a statement regarding the takeover of the SBC . . . the issue is to give Virginia Baptists room to express themselves and churches to do with their money what they will."\textsuperscript{54}

The second recommendation was presented as a resolution affirming the Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond. Both Charles Fuller, First Baptist Church, Roanoke and Terry Harper, Colonial Heights Baptist Church, Colonial Heights voiced strong opposition to the motion. In light of the fact that the recommendation was a non-binding resolution, it did clearly advise churches to financially support the seminary in the coming year. The feelings of many conservatives was beautifully articulated by T. C. Pinckney when he stated that

\begin{quote}
. . . just note that Southern Baptists have six fine seminaries. We do not need another. Of course, if liberals want a seminary where professors teach that the Bible contains errors, they have every right to send their money to it directly. But it is a very different matter for the BGAV to officially endorse a seminary which
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 120.
is an agency of obvious rebellion against the direction the SBC has taken for the last 13 years.55

When the resolution was voted on, it passed overwhelmingly.

During the Tuesday afternoon session, a flood of motions were proposed by conservatives in an attempt to have line items removed from the budget. Their efforts to have the Baptist Joint Committee, Associated Baptist Press, Americans United, and Baptist Seminary at Richmond stricken from the budget all ended in defeat. Even a motion to insert the Sanctity of Human Life Sunday on the BGAV calendar failed. However, all was not lost. On Wednesday morning, the messengers tackled the proposed changes to the bylaws. Contained within the fourfold motion was a sinister yet clever plot to forever stamp out the growing conservative voice. The second part of the motion would only allow for additional messengers based upon a church's contributions to the Cooperative Missions in Virginia.56 The overall tone of the amendment did not sit well with many messengers, therefore, it was soundly defeated.

In 1992, the moderate-conservative debate intensified. The BGAV, through its Committee on Denominational Relationships, began to lay "the groundwork for an orderly consideration of future relationships with other entities."57 The BGAV was about to embark on a new pilgrimage in which mission priorities would be forever linked to a shared ministry philosophy. This shared ministry concept was firmly embraced by the convention's leadership. They claimed that:

The methodology of establishing worthy shared ministry partnerships is critical to the future health and wholeness of the Virginia Baptist Mission Vision and the responsible participation of our people in new ventures. As new ventures in missions and ministry are launched and matured, the genius of shared ministries will serve well to establish and clarify mutual relationships so that the diversity and unity of our mutual vision is honored and preserved.\textsuperscript{58}

The future of the convention was about to take an alarming detour for conservatives.

One of the masterminds behind the conservative thrust in Virginia, T. C. Pinckney, continued to sound the alarm through \textit{The Banner}. Since \textit{The Banner}'s first publication in 1988, the push for churches to bring their full-slate of messengers to the BGAV's annual meetings was a major priority. Like the national resurgence, the key to victory in Virginia was a simple mathematical formula. The solution was found in Article III, Section B, of the BGAV's Constitution and Bylaws. Many churches easily met the qualifications and were entitled to fifteen messengers. However, because of the constant conflict, countless conservative churches were unlikely to join the fight, let alone send a full delegation of messengers to the annual meeting.

Within a short five years, conservatives had become a force to be reckoned with. This momentum was noted by Cody Lowe, a religion writer for the \textit{Roanoke Times & World-News}. In an article reflecting on the BGAV's November meeting in 1991, he noted that "there did appear to be a larger proportional contingent of ultraconservative or fundamentalist messengers than in recent years, judging by the voting on several key issues that divided the association. . . . While the presidential vote was not close – the moderate candidate garnered two-thirds of the vote – several other ballots were closer to

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 45-46.
60 percent/40 percent." The energy created by the 1991 annual meeting propelled conservatives to double their efforts. The rallying cry to conservatives was, "See you in Virginia Beach!"

Meanwhile, moderates within the convention's leadership were forging ahead and laying the groundwork for their new shared ministry partnerships. Conservatives were cautiously hopeful that the swelling tide of criticism over the BGAV's direction would lead to their own conservative resurgence in Virginia. However, with November soon approaching, conservatives would face an uphill battle.

The 169th Annual Meeting of the BGAV on November 10-11, 1992 at the Pavilion Convention Center in Virginia Beach, Virginia opened in a firestorm of political posturing and unbridled criticism. The messenger count quickly accelerated to 4,253. Conservatives would soon realize that their organizational efforts had little impact, if any, on the direction of the BGAV. It soon became obvious that the shared ministry philosophy was merely a disguise to propagate the liberal agenda under the banner of inclusiveness.

The report from the Committee on Denominational Relationships continued to give evidence of the leadership's disdain for the Southern Baptist Convention and the conservative resurgence. Their strong displeasure was manifested in several ways. First, a new budget paradigm would reallocate money away from the SBC to preferred liberal organizations like Baptist Join Committee on Public Affairs, Associated Baptist Press,

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the Baptist Seminary at Richmond, and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Second, amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws would permanently ratify their continuing partnership with these groups.

During the business proceedings on Tuesday afternoon, conservatives voiced opposition to the new budget format. The chairman of the Budget Committee explained the new proposal by stating that:

the committee desired to present a budget around the following perimeters: a determination to keep the focus upon missions; a belief that the autonomy of the local church is basic; and emphasis that the budget be all-inclusive and give a place for every church to enter into the budget process; the development of a plan that would be fair so that each church would use the same procedure and offer simplicity in the procedure; the presentation of a plan that offers stability and is about missions, not politics; and the development of a framework for Cooperative Program giving on which Virginia Baptists can rely for the foreseeable future.61

This new Virginia Baptist Cooperative Program Plan was divided accordingly: SBC Annuity/Protection Plan, Cooperative Missions in Virginia (62%), Partnership Missions (2%), and three World Mission Causes - WM1, WM2, WM3 (36%). The stage was set for a new era of missions giving among Virginia Baptists.

Conservatives reacted quickly as messenger Tim Piland, senior pastor of Nansemond River Baptist Church "moved that the World Missions 3 budget track be deleted."62 In speaking in favor of the motion, Tommy Taylor, senior pastor of London Bridge Baptist pointed out that "the World Missions 3 track is not needed since the option is already available to churches . . . the World Missions 3 track would give yet another

62 Ibid., 141.
step in moving Virginia away from SBC and into the direction of a new denomination.” 63 Regardless of the pleas, both moderates and liberals touted freedom and inclusion. The motion was easily defeated. The outcome of every motion submitted by a conservative messenger was defeated by large margins.

Conservatives were further outraged by the passage of a watered-down resolution regarding homosexuality and the church. When the resolution was brought to the floor for discussion, "Charlie Waller, Fork (Goshen) offered an amendment to the resolution as follows: 'Be It Further Resolved, that we affirm the Biblical teaching that homosexual behavior is sinful and unacceptable for Christians; and therefore, we do not endorse elevating those who practice it to positions of leadership.” 64 After a lively discussion, the amendment failed. Even though conservatives left the annual meeting bothered by the proceedings, they were more united than ever before. "It is hard to imagine how the results of the convention could have been worse for conservatives.” 65 In just two short months, a new conservative fellowship would roar to life.

_The Banner_ reported on six regional meetings held around the state on December 1 & 3, 1992. Conservative pastors, staff, and laity were encouraged to gather at Old Forest Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Virginia on January 28, 1993. The meeting proved decisive as conservatives decided the direction and vision for the future. In that meeting, the group also selected a name for the fellowship, elected officers, and an

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63 Ibid., 142.
64 Ibid., 155.
executive committee to oversee the initiation of our group. Of the estimated 1,000 people from 217 churches gathered for the event, 689 were registered messengers. As a result of that meeting, the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia (SBCV) Fellowship was born.

The vision of the SBCV fellowship was abundantly clear. It stated that "We will assist local Southern Baptist churches in Virginia to: win the lost to Christ, develop believers, and promote missions and evangelism through a strong organization which will provide sound, biblical teaching (consistent with the Baptist Faith and Message 1963), inspirational meetings, timely information, and mutual fellowship, undergirded by the prayers of the saints." The messengers "overwhelmingly rejected a proposal to break away from the moderate-controlled Baptist General Association of Virginia." They made it clear that the group was indeed a fellowship not a convention.

One of the first orders of business was to elect a steering committee that would immediately set the course for the fellowship. Fourteen members were elected to serve on the steering committee. While the newly formed committee met in an adjacent room, messengers and guests participated in a time of worship which included both music and preaching. Upon returning to the business floor, messengers were delighted to hear that T. C. Pinckney was elected chairman of the steering committee. He brought an initial

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report, and offered several recommendations in the form of four motions, all of which passed overwhelmingly.

The second motion presented to the group regarded a name for the fellowship. The steering committee "wanted the name to be clearly identified with the SBC, to be linked with the conservative biblical position, and to avoid using a word like 'fellowship' or 'association' which could cause confusion." According to Kelly Burris, the name quickly materialized. He remembers, "we were sitting there, and we were talking about what kind of name. And I don’t remember who suggested it but somebody said, 'Well, we’re Southern Baptist,' and somebody said, 'We’re conservatives,' somebody said, 'Well, we’re from Virginia.' And that’s exactly how [we] came up [with the name]."

The first officers elected to serve the SBCV were: Tommy J. Taylor, pastor London Bridge Church, Virginia Beach (President); James Bradshaw, pastor Norview Church, Norfolk (First Vice President); Howard Baldwin, evangelist, Richmond (Second Vice President); Ann Frazier, former Foreign Mission Board trustee (Secretary); and Doyle Chauncey, member of First Baptist Church, Norfolk, CPA (Treasurer). Doyle Chauncey recalls sitting up in the balcony during the election of officers, and to his surprise he was elected Treasurer. His pastor looked at him with a faint laugh and said, "What just happened?"

Messengers also elected twenty other people to serve along with the officers as an executive committee. By the end of the day, they had

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70 Kelly Burris, Interview.

overwhelmingly passed two strong resolutions on homosexuality and the sanctity of human life.

The meeting's moderator, Bob Jackson, Director of Missions (DOM) for the New River Baptist Association told the group, "Today, as a result of the most recent meeting of the Baptist General Association of Virginia . . . conservatives are seeing, perhaps with a new realism, that our efforts, at least for now, are not having the level of impact we want them to have."72 One messenger commented that "This is not a political movement, it's a spiritual movement . . . If we don't theologically separate here, we're going to wind up mellowing into that crowd that has sold out."73 Tommy Taylor captured the sentiments of many when he remarked, "We feel doctrinally we're standing where Southern Baptists have always stood."74

The newly formed executive committee was charged with the responsibility of drafting the "constitution, incorporate the SBCV, achieve non-profit status, establish procedures to handle necessary finances, and examine ways conservatives can implement the vision statement"75 and planning another statewide meeting within one year. Kelly Burris vividly remembers the group's first meeting to decide on a formal budget.

I remember as if it happened yesterday. We were at the Golden Corral, and . . . the napkin. I would give anything if we had that napkin. We were sitting around the table, and it seemed like it was Terry Harper, Doyle, and myself, and T.C. And I don’t know, we began to think about [how] we need to do this, and Doyle

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74 Ibid.

reaches over and gets a napkin. And he starts writing all this stuff out. And it ended [up] becoming our budget for that first year . . . $75,000 . . . that was quite amusing.  

After numerous meetings, the executive committee made an announcement, through *The Banner*, that an organizational meeting of the SBCV would be held at Grove Avenue Baptist Church on September 2, 1993. 

President Tommy Taylor called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 2, 1993. After a time of praise and worship, Jess Jackson, the senior pastor of Westwood Hill Baptist Church in Virginia Beach, Virginia, and chairman of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, opened the business session by presenting the proposed Constitution and Bylaws. The mood was one of excitement and great anticipation as approximately 350 to 400 messengers engaged in the democratic process. Messengers enthusiastically agreed to change the word "pastoral" to "ministerial" in Article VII. They also reelected, by acclamation, the slate of officers who had served during the initial interim period.  

One item that did spark lively debate was a motion regarding the doctrinal position in Article III. The original statement reads, "We believe that the Bible is the verbally inspired word of God, wholly without error as originally given by God, and is sufficient as our only infallible rule of faith and practice." The intent of the motion was to replace the phrase "given by God," with the phrase "in which we possess as the God-honored and proven King James Version of 1611." Even though the motion received  

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76 Kelly Burris, Interviewed by Jeffrey R. Pinder, in an office at Kempsville Baptist Church, Virginia Beach, Virginia, July 21, 2009.  

77 Minutes of the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, Organizational Meeting, Grove Avenue Baptist Church, Richmond, Virginia, September 2, 1993.
considerable discussion, it was defeated. In the end, the Constitution and Bylaws were adopted with minor modifications. 78

The group made it abundantly clear where they stood with regard to the Bible. A staff writer for *The Richmond Times-Dispatch*, Ed Briggs, captured the sentiments of the group when he wrote, "The fundamentalists' constitution requires that the organization's members believe in the 'absolute inerrancy' of the Bible and says members and employees who don't hold to the literalist belief will be excluded." 79 David Johnson confirms the statement by saying, "we really needed a statement that any church that was going to be a part of us would have to recognize where we stood. So it was fundamentally to make sure that churches believed what we believed ... We wanted the churches to be a part of us because they had the conviction that we had." 80

Messengers agreed to remove the Nominating Committee from the list of eight Standing Committees, and allow the President to appoint members to serve on this committee. "Jim Pope, Chairman of the Financial Workgroup, and Doyle Chauncey, Treasurer, brought the financial report and a proposed budget. The report showed receipts of $32,017.68, disbursements of $5,133.10, and balance on hand $26,884.58." 81 Doyle Chauncey presented the proposed spending plans for 1993 ($100,000) and 1994 ($150,000) along with operating guidelines. The budget was approved overwhelmingly.

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78 Ibid.


Churches were encouraged to increase their percentage giving to the SBC through the SBCV. They were directed to mail their contributions to: Mr. Doyle Chauncey, Treasurer, SBCV, P.O. Box 62000, Virginia Beach, VA 23466.82

Messengers assembled that day at Grove Avenue Baptist Church also elected the following people to serve as the first Executive Committee:


After several reports and miscellaneous business, the meeting was closed in an ironic fashion as Michael Clingenpeel, the new editor of the Religious Herald, offered the benediction. In a span of three hours and fifteen minutes, the SBCV fellowship officially came to life, and all in attendance were considered charter members.

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82 Ibid.
Chapter Two

A Step of Faith

The SBCV Executive Committee began navigating uncharted waters with the hope of clearly defining the purpose of the SBCV fellowship. The committee called upon conservative Virginia Baptists to uphold them in prayer as they continued planning for the future. The group met for the first time on October 12, 1993 in Richmond, Virginia. The goal of the meeting was to determine not only the mission of the SBCV but also that of The Banner. Furthermore, those who attended the meeting recognized the need for a continuing dialogue with the BGAV leadership. The objective was to find some form of common ground without compromising theological convictions. The task would prove to be difficult at best.84

With the approaching BGAV's annual meeting in November, conservatives were feeling the pressure from decades of isolation. Completely excluded from the decision-making process, many conservatives were contemplating whether or not to attend the meeting. Once again, The Banner became the catalyst for rallying the troops. T. C. Pinckney plainly showed how over the past eight years conservative pastors in Virginia had increased while liberal pastors were steadily declining. The results of the national resurgence was not only having a positive effect on the SBC but on Virginia as well.

Pinckney's admonition was clear, "Baptists make corporate decisions by vote. So it's simple: if you don't come and bring all your messengers, you can't vote. If you don't

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vote, we won't win. Pastors, you must engage your laymen!"\textsuperscript{85} Even as late as October, \textit{The Banner} challenged pastors to not only bring a full-slate of messengers to the convention but to also "contend for the faith" (Jude 3). The prospect of winning was indelibly linked to the side which secured the most messengers.

The 170th annual meeting of the BGAV took place on November 9-10, 1993 at the Richmond Centre. Conservative messengers were delighted to see that the General Board had made an effort to strengthen the original watered-down resolution on homosexuality with a strong biblical one. The new resolution passed overwhelmingly. However, the most critical issue facing conservatives was a proposed amendment to Article III, Section B of the Constitution and Bylaws. The planned change would greatly favor churches who allocated more of their money to the state than to the national convention. Even though the measure was defeated, conservatives were left in a quandary contemplating that either the state needed more money or the BGAV's leadership was attempting to blatantly limit their messengers. Also, conservatives could not help but notice that this was the second attempt by moderates to change the messenger count in their favor.

The report given by the Committee on Denominational Relations continued to reveal a strong distaste for conservative policies and directional changes within the SBC. Regarding theological education, the committee voiced its displeasure concerning recent actions taken at two seminaries by stating that there was a "continuing disarray of theological education at the SBC seminaries, especially Southeastern and Southern . . . We are deeply concerned that these institutions maintain quality educational programs

and do not convert their ministries from education to indoctrination. As the SBC seminaries were increasingly aligning themselves with the full authority of the Word of God, liberal professors and administrators simply resigned. This move was simply unacceptable to the committee and to the leadership of the BGAV.

The "Shared Ministry" philosophy had become a reality. Not only was the Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond (BTSR) endorsed, it was also fully embraced. In the spring of 1993, the General Board quickly moved to appoint two people to the board of trustees at the BTSR. The move qualified students for the Keesee Memorial Scholarship Fund. The BTSR was now considered a full-fledged ministry partner with the BGAV.

Furthermore, the Committee on Denominational Relations recommended that Bylaw Article II, Section C, Paragraph 3 be added to allow the Committee on Boards and Committees to nominate persons to serve as trustees for the Associated Baptist Press and the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. In addition, the committee requested that the incoming president appoint a nine-member Special Committee on Denominational Relations to serve until the annual meeting of 1996.

Messengers approved both the measure and the Bylaw amendment. The newly appointed Special Committee on Denominational Relations would continue "to inform Virginia Baptists about the issues and circumstances [affecting their] cooperation with the Southern Baptist Convention and other Baptist bodies." The lasting impact by this committee proved to be devastating for conservative Baptists in Virginia. Additionally,

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87 Ibid., 58.

88 Ibid.
messengers, by a small margin, gave the Denominational Relations Committee permission to begin a dialogue with the American Baptist Convention and the Progressive Baptist Convention. This shift further increased speculation that the BGAV was moving away from the SBC.

By early December, conservatives were seriously asking whether or not it was time for the SBCV fellowship to begin the process of formally pursuing a new state convention. The question deserved a straightforward answer. Many conservatives were simply tired of the internal strife and political manipulation. In light of the on-going struggle, those ready to sever ties with the BGAV often chimed, "Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?" For conservatives, returning the BGAV to its conservative theological foundation was proving to be an exhausting uphill battle. Moreover, it was abundantly clear that the disagreements facing moderates and conservatives were going to be almost impossible to rectify. The political landscape of the BGAV was becoming increasingly liberal.

The second meeting of the SBCV's Executive Committee took place on December 9, 1993 at the SBC's Missionary Learning Center in Rockville, Virginia. Out of that meeting came a unanimous decision to find and secure an Executive/Director Treasurer for the SBCV Fellowship. Meanwhile, the leadership within the BGAV offered to dialogue with the SBCV's leadership on the issue of cooperation. The newly elected president of the BGAV, Ronald W. Crawford, went so far as to create a twenty-member "Presidential Council on Cooperation." He said, "The purpose of the council will be to foster trust among the leaders of significant Virginia Baptist coalitions . . . These people

89 Amos 3:3 (NJKV).
will explore ways to enhance cooperation, trust and mutual respect in Virginia Baptist life. They will help us define and set parameters of cooperation for the future."

Conservatives were not interested in simply holding a dialogue to find a consensus over differences. To them "cooperation [was] important but fidelity to God's Word infinitely more so." The "Presidential Council on Cooperation" was organized in early February 1994 and co-chaired by Neil Jones (moderate pastor of Columbia Baptist Church in Falls Church, Virginia) and Tommy Taylor (president of the SBCV fellowship and conservative pastor of London Bridge Baptist in Virginia Beach, Virginia). The committee consisted of all men: five moderates, five conservatives, and five unaligned. The BGAV president, Ron Crawford, Executive Director, Reginald McDonough, and state treasurer, Nat Kellum were also considered ex-officio members of the committee.

The impetus behind the formation of the "Presidential Council on Cooperation" was Tommy Taylor. He remembers calling Neil Jones and setting up a meeting between the two men. They met a couple of times at a motel in Richmond, Virginia. Eventually, the two men talked with Reggie McDonough, and soon after the "Presidential Council on Cooperation" was born. This group was a microcosm of the SBC's 1987 Peace Committee. Jones represented the moderates while Taylor was the mouthpiece for conservatives. After a few meetings, good fellowship, and much dialogue, it was obvious to the group that the road to common ground was impossible. At this juncture, Taylor bowed out gracefully due to a family crisis and the pressures of pastoral ministry. Taylor


91 Ibid.
remembers thinking that it was going to be impossible to avoid a split in the state convention.92

Meanwhile, the SBCV's Executive Committee continued to meet. It held a one-
day retreat entitled, "Prayer/Spiritual Preparation," at the Missionary Learning Center in
Rockville, Virginia on April 5, 1994. During the morning assembly, Al Gilbert, pastor of
Liberty Baptist Church, Hampton, Virginia, led this time of prayer and spiritual
preparation. The afternoon business session was led by president Tommy Taylor. Kelly
Burris, chairman of the Search Committee, presented a motion requesting permission for
the Search Committee to move forward in securing a part-time Interim Executive
Director. The motion was unanimously approved.93

It did not take long for the SBCV's Executive Committee to approve and finalize
a job description for a part-time Interim Executive Director. In early July 1994, the
Search Committee recommended Reverend Howard A. Baldwin Jr. to fill the position.
Baldwin, age fifty-nine, was unanimously elected on June 30, by the Executive
Committee.94 His former role as a senior pastor and trustee of the Foreign Mission Board
added credibility to the SBCV fellowship. Also, Baldwin's current job as an evangelist
and president of the Multi-Media Ministries expanded the organization's communications
ability. He began serving as part-time Interim Executive Director on July 1, 1994. His
home at 1335 S. Providence Road, Richmond, Virginia housed the first SBCV offices.

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Immediately, Baldwin began publishing a monthly newsletter entitled, "Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia News." The first issue debuted in August, 1994. He explained that this newsletter published by the SBCV "seeks to be as non-political as possible to project a positive spirit of cooperation among Southern Baptists in Virginia." It also encouraged Virginia Baptists to seek to work together with the BGAV's leadership and to remain involved in the political process. At this point, it was clear that the SBCV was not planning on forming a new state convention. The newsletter went on to announce upcoming events, and also to remind conservatives of informational fellowships (Impact Meetings) that would be held around the state.

The second annual meeting of the SBCV was held at Colonial Heights Baptist Church in Colonial Heights, Virginia on September 15, 1994 at 2:00 p.m. Both The Banner and the SBCV/News published the date, time, and place, strongly encouraging all Virginia Southern Baptists to attend the meeting. The theme for the gathering was "Lift Up the Lord" with additional emphasis on missions, evangelism, and discipleship. It was also at this meeting that messengers confirmed by a standing vote the decision by the Executive Committee to hire Reverend Howard Baldwin as the new interim Executive Director. The meeting was attended by 266 people from 103 churches.

President Tommy Taylor called the meeting to order at 2:15 p.m. Messengers agreed to elect the new officers based upon the number of votes received by each nominee. Thus, Bob Melvin, pastor of Spotswood Baptist Church, Fredericksburg, was

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96 Ibid.
elected president. Terry Harper, pastor of Colonial Heights Baptist Church, Colonial Heights, was elected first vice president. And Jim Bradshaw, pastor of Norview Baptist Church, Norfolk was elected second vice president. Chris Baldwin, Howard's wife, was elected by acclamation as Secretary. In addition to these elected positions, messengers also approved an operating budget of $105,000.97

The atmosphere surrounding the event was marked by a spirit of cooperation and friendliness. "The presidential race was the only area where votes were split at the meeting. Every issue passed without opposition. Tommy Taylor quipped at one point that he was not sure if it was really a Baptist meeting since no disagreement was expressed."98 In an effort to show solidarity, John Simms, a member of First Baptist Church, Roanoke, presented a resolution calling "for wholehearted and enthusiastic prayer and financial support" for the SBC Cooperative Program.99 The measure passed overwhelmingly.

After the election of Jim Henry at the SBC convention in Orlando, Florida in 1994 and just on the heels of the BGAV's annual meeting, conservatives were hoping for a new day of cooperation. However, hope would be short-lived. Once again the moderates controlling the state convention would propose a constitutional amendment designed to only recognize messengers from churches contributing to the BGAV. Similar motions were defeated in 1991 and 1993. Nonetheless, the haunting prospect of

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passing such an amendment frightened many Virginia conservatives. A church's messenger count has always been determined based upon a church's total Cooperative Program giving, not just on money retained within the state.

T. C. Pinckney reflects on possible motives when he writes:

Why does this amendment keep coming back? Obviously it is because the liberal cabal which dominates BGAV decisions wishes to undercut the freedom of conservative churches to be comfortable regarding the use of their Cooperative Program gifts and wants to destroy any possibility that conservatives may eventually be able to effect change in Virginia. This group talks a lot about inclusiveness and freedom, but when churches begin to exercise the prerogatives of freedom, they seek to punish them, to undercut their potential ability to bring about change through the historic, democratic, Baptist voting process. 100

Pinckney's word resonated deeply within the hearts and minds of conservatives. Disgust over such political posturing would soon lead to further division.

Conservatives were already outraged over a blistering editorial written by Michael Clingenpeel in the Religious Herald on September 22, 1994. In the article, Clingenpeel characterized conservatives as "an honest-to-goodness clone of the moderates' Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. What CBF is to the Southern Baptist Convention, SBCV is to the Baptist General Association of Virginia." 101 He went on to say that "Conservatives say they have not found fellowship in the BGAV. But to suggest their purpose is solely fellowship and missions is disingenuous. They also formed SBCV to promote their brand of conservative theology and denominational politics . . . ." 102

Conservatives were quick to respond to the ideological rhetoric. "SBCV

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102 Ibid.
members' loyalty is to the inerrant, infallible, powerful Word of God . . . primarily in its personal manifestation in Jesus, our Lord and Savior and King, but also in its written manifestation, the Bible. Our organizational affinities derive from that focus of faith. The loyalty of the SBCV is NOT to the SBC, NOT to the BGAV, but rather to the Word of God. ¹⁰³ The struggle had always been over the authority of the Scriptures.

On November 15-16, 1994, 3,272 messengers descended on the Salem Civic Center in Salem, Virginia for the 171st Annual Meeting of the BGAV. The prevailing atmosphere was one of continued defiance against the conservative direction of the SBC. The historical policy governing the number of messengers a church can send to the BGAV annual meeting fell victim to both political and financial calculations. Previously, churches were allotted messengers based upon their giving to national and/or state Southern Baptist causes. The new Bylaw change, Article III, Section B, would only recognize messengers from churches contributing to "the Virginia Portion of Cooperative Program funds and State Missions Offering funds of the General Association." ¹⁰⁴

With an attitude of reason and fairness, Tim Piland, pastor of Nansemond River Baptist Church, pointed out that "such a change would frustrate the spirit of reconciliation." He further demonstrated how the motion would negatively impact fifteen percent of Virginia churches who were already supplying twenty percent of the annual budget. Opposing sides articulated the pros and cons of such a change. However, in the


end the measure passed by 72.70%. The power of the liberal left also continued their control of the elected office as their candidates for the office of president, first vice-president, and second vice-president easily claimed victory.\textsuperscript{105}

The Bylaw change exploded like a destructive earthquake upon the SBCV fellowship. In his December newsletter, Howard Baldwin wrote that "When money becomes the basic reason of Baptist 'connectionalism' instead of the cause of Christ, we are in deep trouble . . . These next few months will be critical in the life of Baptists in Virginia."\textsuperscript{106} A. C. Smith prophetically predicts the outcome of such action by stating:

The immediate impact of the amendment is that those conservative Southern Baptist churches in the state of Virginia which have designed their own giving plans donating less than 60% to Virginia will be allowed fewer messengers at future state convention meetings. The long term result is that conservative Southern Baptists will have little or no prospect of effecting change in the Baptist General Association of Virginia by voting.\textsuperscript{107}

The ripple effect left a gaping hole in the delicate relationship between Virginia moderates and conservatives.

The SBCV Executive Committee sprang into action. On December 8, 1994, the group met at Grove Avenue Baptist Church and unanimously passed the following motion:

That the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia president, Bob R. Melvin, appoint a committee to study the procedures and requirements for the establishment of the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia as a separate state convention and to bring a report of its findings and a recommendation for action

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., 165-166.


to the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia Executive Committee not later than its May 1995 meeting.\textsuperscript{108}

Soon after, the president appointed a seven-member committee to "study the procedures and requirements" necessary for beginning a new state convention. The committee consisted of the following men: Bob Jackson (Chairman), Ron Boswell, Al Gilbert, David Johnson, Doyle Chauncey, Jess Jackson, and John Simms.\textsuperscript{109}

The action drew immediate fire from Ron Crawford, a BGAV moderate and former president. Crawford lamented that "the conservatives' action was uncalled for. Virginia Baptists have continually demonstrated a willingness to be open to the needs of ultra conservatives . . . there really is no call for their filing for divorce."\textsuperscript{110} On the other hand, conservatives felt isolated and purposefully cut off from the decision-making process within the BGAV. The wave of frustration had reached a decisive moment, and conservative Virginia Baptists refused to stand idly by and watch the Cooperative Program continue to suffer.

By early February, the seven-member Study Committee appointed by the president presented its findings to the Executive Committee. The meeting was held in Richmond on February 2, 1995. Committee members addressed several important concerns regarding a new state convention. First, would the SBC recognize the constitutionality of a new state convention? Second, would the SBC allow a new state


\textsuperscript{110} Michael Paul Williams, "Faction examines cutting ties," \textit{The Richmond Times-Dispatch}, Saturday, December 10, 1994.
convention to have representation on their boards and agencies? The Executive Committee wrestled over the ramifications of these as well as many other compelling questions. Lingering concerns led the group to seek additional information from the Executive Committee of the SBC.111

February 1995 was highlighted by the "Here's Hope: Share Jesus Now" SBCV Evangelism Conference. The keynote speaker for this event was none other than Dr. W. A. Criswell, senior pastor of First Baptist Church, Dallas, TX, and conservative patriarch of the SBC resurgence. The conference was held at Grove Avenue Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia on February 13-14. Other notable speakers included: Gene Jorganson, Ron Boswell, Mark Stone, Danny Akin, Bob Melvin, Mike Mueller, and Tim Smith. Attendees were challenged to impact their communities with the gospel of Christ. Many were so motivated that they went out on Monday afternoon and shared the love of Jesus in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Investigation into the possible formation of a new state convention continued to be a top priority for the Study Committee. The committee requested input from conservatives around the state, and in the spring of 1995, they received over sixty letters voicing support. In light of this encouragement, the committee was reenergized to continue its open discourse with conservatives in the state and with the SBC Executive Committee. Furthermore, during this time, the IRS notified the SBCV that the organization was approved for Federal Tax Exemption. From this point forward, all gifts received by the SBCV would be considered tax exempt.

On May 25, 1995, the Executive Committee met and approved the following recommendation:

The Executive Committee of the SBCV recommends that the SBCV continue to strengthen its ministries and expand its base of church participation. The SBCV remains open to the leadership of God regarding its future within Virginia and the SBC. The Executive Committee is now evaluating its total ministry activities to determine how to increase its impact for Christ in Virginia and around the world, and will bring specific recommendations as to how to accomplish this at the Fall 1995 Annual Meeting.\textsuperscript{112}

The recommendation was also addressed by president Bob Melvin in an open letter printed in the June 1995 \textit{Baptist Banner}. Melvin encouraged conservative Baptists to share ideas and to give specific suggestions for how SBCV can better serve the needs of individual churches.

By mid-June, attention shifted to the national scene as the SBC was about to celebrate one hundred and fifty years. Messengers assembled in Atlanta, Georgia on June 20-22, 1995, and enthusiastically endorsed the "Covenant for a New Century" and the proposal to restructure the SBC. The new structure included renaming the Foreign Mission Board to the International Mission Board (IMB) and the Home Mission Board to the North American Mission Board (NAMB). Messengers were challenged to take a bold step of faith as pioneers for the twenty-first century. At this point, the resurgence had given conservatives firm control of every seminary, board, and agency. Even though the convention was marked by celebration, "there [remained] a significant, chronic rift in the denomination."\textsuperscript{113} The chronic rift had reached epic proportions in Virginia.


The cries by conservatives for a new state convention were growing louder and louder. The Interim Executive Director, Howard Baldwin, tried to quell concerns when he wrote, "At the present time the SBCV has not recommended the formation of a new Virginia Baptist State Convention, but the question still remains open for the future."\(^\text{114}\)

However, Terry Collier, a member of Ridgeview Baptist Church, Wise, Virginia, displayed his frustration with the BGAV by saying:

> We are linked to the BGAV which projects the liberal Virginia Baptist image. No matter that we speak or write in support of the truth. No matter that your church votes unanimously to negatively designate all offensive budget items. You are still a "Virginia Baptist" and linked to the BGAV agenda. Our influence in the BGAV is zero. Our only choice at this point is to declare ourselves a new state convention, and proclaim that at least this group of Virginia Baptists believe that the Bible is still the inerrant Word of God, that sin is still sin, and that Christ is still the only way to peace in this life and eternity in heaven.\(^\text{115}\)

Needless to say, tensions were running high, and the SBCV Executive Committee was feeling the pressure.

Former president of the SBCV, Tommy Taylor, quickly addressed the growing dissatisfaction by conservatives.

I have serious reservations about the formation of another state convention just now. My reasons are as follows:

1. Good timing is everything; I don't think the time is right.
2. The obvious concern over possibly losing conservative representation on the SBC boards and agencies.
3. A most important consideration is that conservatives would lose their influence in the state. Though currently disenfranchised by the BGAV action we still wield considerable influence in Virginia; more, I feel, than many


conservatives realize. What were we accomplishing with our votes before we were disenfranchised; what really did we lose?

4. There are still many good churches and good pastors in Virginia who are sort of "trapped" in the middle; by pulling out we would largely lose the opportunity to share the truth of God's Word with them and to clarify the real issues for these many congregations.

5. Are state conventions on their way out? Modern technology brings us all much closer to the SBC; thus lessening the need for the state convention to serve as a conduit.

6. To secede now would be seen by some to justify the oft-made claim that we're the bad guys; radical, reactionary, red-neck extremists.

7. I don't think we're even close to having the financial base needed to start a new convention. It still troubles me that numerous folks who seem to be on our side, even some of our leaders, have given little or no monetary support to our cause.

8. Speaking of dollars, we could with a concerted effort likely wield a greater influence in the state by withholding our dollars from the BGAV than by pulling out.

9. What exactly would we gain by seceding? A sense of vindication? An end to unequal yoking? How much unequal yoking do we often "live with" in our local churches?

10. Nothing compels us to attend the BGAV meetings any more. And nothing hinders us, as a fellowship, from having all the meetings we want to have; for the purposes of evangelism, motivation, leadership training, church growth, etc..

11. The momentum is in our favor over the long haul in Virginia, with the direction of the SBC and especially the ongoing effect of Southeastern and Southern seminaries now being conservative.

12. Our SBC president, Jim Henry, strongly counsels against forming a new state convention; basically for the reasons I've listed above. I talked to Jim at some length recently in Nashville at a meeting of the Baptist Sunday School Board.\(^{116}\)

It was evident that there were still many concerns being raised as to the reasons for moving forward with a new convention. The possible negative consequences began to cause some doubt.

In the meantime, Demas B. Martin, an integral member of the SBCV’s Constitution Committee, cautioned conservatives to proceed at a much slower pace. His admonition was clear:

SBCV should have documentation for its identity before it calls itself a state convention. In order to vote in a state convention, one must be an elected messenger of a church which has voted to be affiliated with and gives to the cooperative program budget of that state convention. While I am in sympathy with many individuals who want to participate in SBCV . . . I believe we should change our constitution to recognize only duly elected messengers from affiliated churches before becoming a state convention. I recommend that SBCV continue as a fellowship and neither apply for or declare ourselves as a new state convention.¹¹⁷

In the same Baptist Banner issue, Bill Templeton, senior pastor at Northside Baptist Church, Charlottesville, Virginia, articulated four reasons (theology, witness, association, and timing) for starting a new state convention immediately. Again, it was clear that some were strong proponents of launching immediately while others preferred a more cautious approach.

Additionally, the 1995 October issue of The Banner printed two opposing views regarding the birth of a new state convention by two very influential men. Dr. Gary L. Hollingsworth, pastor of First Baptist Church, Alexandria, Virginia, believed that conservatives should seek every avenue in order to reconcile and cooperate with the BGAV. Hollingsworth was a newcomer to Virginia, and served on the "President's Council of Cooperation" a year earlier as an "unaligned" member. However, Terry L. Harper, pastor of Colonial Heights Baptist Church, concludes that it is high time for conservatives to form a new state convention. He gently reminded his readers of many

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past struggles such as: the inerrancy of the Scripture, abortion, homosexuality, the Virginia Baptist Hospital in Lynchburg, the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, the Richmond Baptist Seminary, Associated Baptist Press, etc. As if in an outburst, Harper utters, "Dearly Beloved, the fact still remains that I am affiliated with a body that supports and promotes these things that to my conscience are anathema!" It is at this juncture that the clear reasons for creating a new state convention were primarily biblical in nature.

The Third Annual Meeting of the SBCV was held at First Baptist Church, Norfolk, Virginia on November 7, 1995. The president, Bob Melvin, called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. After the normal meeting formalities, the motion that garnered the most attention was the recommendation from the September 21 Executive Committee meeting. The motion reads as follows: "The Executive Committee of the SBCV recommends the hiring, as soon as possible, of a full-time Executive Director to educate, unify and solidify conservative Southern Baptists in Virginia in recognition of the eventual formation of a separate state convention." The ensuing debate revealed both conviction and caution.

At some point during the debate, Terry Harper made a substitute motion. The new motion stated that "The Executive Committee of the SBCV recommends the hiring, as soon as possible, of a full-time Executive Director to educate, unify and solidify conservative Southern Baptists in Virginia and that the SBCV declare ourselves a State


119 Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, Third Annual Meeting, First Baptist Church, Norfolk, Virginia, November 7, 1995, 7.
Convention as of today, November 7, 1995." This led to considerable dialogue. D. B. Martin ended the debate by proposing a substitute to the substitute motion. The substitute proposal divided the motion into two separate parts. Records indicate that messengers overwhelmingly approved this maneuver, and they enthusiastically adopted the first part of the motion. However, the second part of the motion declaring the SBCV a separate state convention starting immediately was defeated by 150 votes against and 60 votes in favor.

Messengers also reelected Bob Melvin as president, Terry Harper as First Vice President, and Doyle Chauncey as Treasurer. Two new faces elected to serve as officers were Charles Waller, Fork Baptist Church, Bumpass, Virginia, (Second Vice President) and Steven Smith, Salem Baptist Church, Richmond, Virginia, (Secretary). Additionally, messengers agreed to more than double the size of the budget from $105,000 (1995) to $221,000 (1996). The budget plan was dubbed, "Building Bridges and Beyond." The initial plans were to send 35% to the SBC Executive Committee during 1996 and to progressively increase the percentage giving to a 50/50 split between the state and the national convention by the year 2000. Hence, the SBCV, by voice and demonstration, began an historical quest to express its commitment to the SBC.

No one denied the fact that the SBCV was growing. In an "Interim Executive Director's Report," Howard Baldwin clearly demonstrated just how fast the rate of growth was. "At the end of 1993 there were 13 churches which had given to the SBCV; by the end of 1994 there were 50 churches, and by the end of September 1995 there were 79

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120 Ibid., 8.
121 Ibid., 8-9.
churches which had given, and 144 churches in Virginia that [had] been involved in the SBCV through giving and through their attendance."\textsuperscript{122} Obviously, many conservative churches were continuing to channel their Cooperative Program dollars to the SBC through the budget of the SBCV Fellowship.

It is also interesting to note the churches who supported the SBCV's 1995 budget with large financial gifts. These churches include: Colonial Heights Baptist Church ($23,125.07), Kempsville Baptist Church ($13,115.41), London Bridge Baptist Church ($17,649.64), Rileyville Baptist Church ($4,346.38), and Spotswood Baptist Church ($15,942.20). These five churches alone contributed over 70\% of the SBCV's 1995 total budget. Their commitment to the SBC, the SBCV Fellowship and its future was unshakable. Their faith was demonstrated by putting their feet into the shoes of faith.

Two days later, the BGAV held its 172nd Annual Meeting at the Virginia Beach Pavilion in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Many conservatives had finally had enough and simply boycotted the meeting. According to records, the total messenger count for the two day convention was 2,118, down considerably from previous years. A few conservative Baptists did attend the meeting. However, a budget amendment offered by Charlie Waller to eliminate funds to institutions which serve alcohol was soundly defeated. Martha Wiles' motion to defund Americans United for Separation of Church and State also fell on deaf ears. In all, the BGAV strengthened its partnership with the CBF, and continued almost unabated into the vast sea of liberalism.\textsuperscript{123}

\textsuperscript{122} Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, \textit{Second Annual Meeting}, 6.

It was painfully obvious that reconciliation between moderates and conservatives had failed. Outgoing BGAV president, Margaret Wayland, was reported as saying, "We have wasted too much time, too much energy in this controversy. We have to forget all the hurt and move on." In summing up the 1995 BGAV's annual meeting and in response to the finger pointing, T. C. Pinckney added these thoughtful words:

This is not a time for anger or rancor. It is a time for prayer, careful observation, deep thought, and a willingness to stand upon God's perfect Word. While personal decisions may well be painful, in the long run it will be better for both moderates and conservatives to make a clear and conscious decision and follow it through. Seek God's will and do it without being swayed by the cost. From this point forward, the rift between conservatives and moderates would never be healed. In just a few short months, a new state convention would emerge.

The SBCV Search Committee, chaired by Kelly Burris, began the tedious task of securing a full-time Executive Director. After many interviews and much prayer, Kelly Burris remembers how God led him to talk with Doyle Chauncey about the position. The two enjoyed lunch together, and Kelly challenged Doyle to consider the job. The rest of the committee thought that he would be an excellent choice. Dr. Bob Davis recalls talking with Kelly in the parking lot at the Mission Learning Center after an Executive Committee meeting. He boldly stated that Doyle was the man. Davis went on to explain how Doyle's theological degree from Southwestern Seminary, his experience as a pastor...

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and church planter, his love for the Lord, and the fact that he was a CPA and business manager at First Baptist Church qualified him for the job. Davis then commented, "Now tell me who better could fit what we are looking for."\textsuperscript{127}

With his humble spirit, Dr. Chauncey did not initially apply for the position. However, he soon surrendered to the call of God and submitted his name as a possible candidate. After several interviews, the Executive Committee unanimously recommended Dr. Doyle Chauncey for the job. The word spread quickly that there would be a special called meeting of the SBCV on March 21, 1996 at Grove Avenue Baptist Church, Richmond, Virginia. The worship center bustled with excitement as approximately four hundred messengers gathered that evening and unanimously confirmed Dr. Chauncey as the first full-time Executive Director. He challenged those attending by saying, "We need to discover the biblical purpose of why we exist, what is our business and what isn't our business. To know our purpose builds morale, reduces frustration, and promotes cooperation."\textsuperscript{128}

Immediately, conservative churches around the state began joining forces with the SBCV. At that time, the main tools used for communicating the conservative message was \textit{The Banner} and the \textit{SBCV Update}. By May 1996, one hundred and nine churches were channeling their monies through the SBCV. Furthermore, during a regional meeting held in Martinsville, pastor Rodney Houston, Chatmoss Baptist Church, presented Doyle Chauncey with a letter from [his] church petitioning the SBCV for


\textsuperscript{128} A. C. Smith, "Chauncey Confirmed by Conservatives," \textit{The Baptist Banner}, Vol. IX, No. 4, April 1996; and Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, \textit{Called Meeting}, Grove Avenue Baptist Church, Richmond, Virginia, March 21, 1996.
formal membership." The bold move created excitement throughout the organization as other churches began to follow suit. Meanwhile, D. B. Martin as well as others, in light of previous concerns, were now convinced that the timing was right for the SBCV to take on state convention status.

The summer of 1996 was filled with great anticipation and many unanswered questions. The Executive Committee worked diligently to allay any fears of the future. As more and more pastors and laymen weighed in on the issue, the combined voice for separation grew louder. Disappointment with the direction of the BGAV had reached an all-time high. In light of the unfolding events, Reverend Ronald N. Boswell, pastor of Grove Avenue Baptist Church, Richmond, Virginia, penned his feelings of faith and courage in what would eventually become known as the SBCV’s Emancipation Proclamation. He concluded his address by stating:

I believe that when we meet in September, we will decide to gently, lovingly, but courageously take a step to the side and form a new fellowship around the perfect Word of God. We will be an imperfect people and we will disagree from time to time, but we will agree that there is one faith, one Lord, one baptism, and we will move together for the glory of God!  

In addition to Boswell, both T. C. Pinckney and George F. Mullinax, pastor at Western Branch Baptist Church, Portsmouth, Virginia, were convinced that the door of opportunity for beginning a new state convention was now. The SBCV’s Executive Committee concurred, and during its meeting on August 16, 1996, the group unanimously issued this recommendation:

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that the SBCV, at its September 16, 1996 Annual Meeting, declare itself a state convention aligned with the Southern Baptist Convention. The Executive Committee further recommends that the present organization of the SBCV, including the constitution, committees, etc. remain in place until a transition committee, as appointed by the president, has brought its recommendation at the 1997 Annual Meeting or at a called meeting prior thereto.¹³¹

*The Banner* quickly relayed the announcement to its readers, and also published the location, times, and guest speakers. History was about to be made.

With an air of expectancy, over five hundred messengers from ninety-one churches converged on Grove Avenue Baptist Church for the fourth Annual Meeting of the SBCV. The historic meeting began at 2:00 p.m. on September 16, 1996. President Bob Melvin presided over the business session. Both guest speakers, Junior Hill and John Phillips, were challenging and encouraging. They reminded the crowd to remain faithful to the Lord, His Word, and His commission.

Afterwards, when the president read the Executive Committee's recommendation, a surprising thing happened. At first, as business proceeded, the messengers were given an opportunity to speak for or against the recommendation. Then something amazing happened. No one stood to speak. After offering several more opportunities for dialogue, the president calmly continued and asked those in favor of the recommendation to raise their ballots. There was not a single "NO" vote. Following the initial shock and the deafening silence, messengers erupted with a prolonged standing applause accompanied by hearty "Amens."¹³²


¹³² T. C. Pinckney, "We Have A New State Convention!" *The Baptist Banner,* Vol. IX, No. 8, September 1996.
The new Executive Director, Doyle Chauncey, delivered an encouraging yet challenging address. He tackled the unresolved differences between the SBCV and the BGAV, drew attention to the positive contacts with the SBC regarding recognition and representation, and spoke to the issue of affiliation and associations. Dr. Chauncey also graciously pointed out the need to stand firm on essential theological and biblical absolutes, the ability to diminish the controversy through accentuating the positive, the necessity of designing a new state convention model, and the pitfall of underestimating the task. He reminded those in attendance that "a new convention still requires a bold step of faith and willingness to assume the risks involved in not having all the answers."\footnote{Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, \textit{Fourth Annual Meeting}, 13-19.}

Soon thereafter, messengers turned their attention to the election of officers. Terry L. Harper was duly elected as the first president of the new convention. The new slate of officers also included: Kelly Burris (First Vice President), Kenneth Gooch (Second Vice President), and Steven Smith (Secretary). Doyle Chauncey had been previously approved in an earlier meeting as the Executive Director/Treasurer. However, when it came time to adopt a new budget for 1996-1997, Chauncey shared that as of the end of August 1996, the budget receipts for the fiscal year were $542,675, more than twice the 1996 budget. In addition to these figures, total receipts including designated funds were $743,517. The immediate financial blessing was almost overwhelming.\footnote{Ibid.}

The blessings of the budget created two other exciting dynamics on that day. First, Jim Pope, chairman of the Finance Committee, presented the 1996-1997 budget of
$774,000, and passionately called for its approval. Messengers obliged with unanimous support. Second, to the delight of many, the body adopted a 50/50 division of budget receipts between the SBCV and the SBC. The 50/50 goal by the year 2000 had materialized within the first year. The "Bridges To The Twenty First Century" goals and objectives were falling into place. Conservatives could not have been more convinced of the Lord's confirmation on this convention. The meeting was characterized by unity, anticipation, humor, and a common purpose.\footnote{135 T. C. Pinckney, "SBCV Budget: Giant Steps!" The Baptist Banner, Vol. IX, No. 8, September 1996.}

Upon the SBCV's declaration as a new state convention, the outgoing president, Bob Melvin, appointed a Transition Team composed of the following people:

- David Johnson, pastor of Rileyville Baptist Church and Chairman of the Youth Committee
- D. B. Martin, pastor of Natural Bridge Baptist Church and member of the SBCV Finance Committee
- T. C. Pinckney, Editor of The Baptist Banner and member of the Executive Committee
- Kelly Burris, pastor of Kempsville Baptist Church, chairman, and First Vice President of the SBCV
- Ron Boswell, pastor of Grove Avenue Baptist Church and President of the 1996 Virginia Bible Conference
- Terry Harper, pastor of Colonial Heights Baptist Church and President of the SBCV
- Bob Melvin, pastor of Spotswood Baptist Church and President of the SBCV (1995-96)
- Howard Baldwin, evangelist and former Interim Executive Director of the SBCV
- Doyle Chauncey, Executive Director/Treasurer of the SBCV
Their responsibility was "to study the implications of the approved recommendation, take the necessary action required immediately, and bring a report to the body no later than the next annual meeting."\textsuperscript{136}

In addition to the Transition Team's appointment, messengers also passed five resolutions without any opposition. They took a strong biblical stance against homosexuality and abortion. Furthermore, Bill Templeton, chairman of the Nominating Committee, presented the names of those who would serve in various leadership positions for the upcoming year. In his report, Templeton reminded the body that "We have, of course, made sure that the people we nominate are conservative in their theology. But, we have tried to make sure that each one of them is conservative in their approach to convention matters, both state and national."\textsuperscript{137} The day marked a new beginning for conservative Baptists in Virginia.

As a result, Chauncey sent a letter to the SBC Executive Committee informing them of the unanimous decision by the members of the SBCV. Dr. Morris Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee returned a formal written reply welcoming the SBCV into a cooperative partnership with the SBC designed to facilitate, extend, and enlarge "the Great Commission ministries of Southern Baptist churches, to the glory of God the Father, under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, upon the authority of Holy Scripture, and by the empowerment of the Holy Spirit."\textsuperscript{138} On September 16, 1996, with 469 registered messengers from ninety-one churches,

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\item[\textsuperscript{136}] Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, Book of Reports, \textit{Fifth Annual Meeting}, Green Ridge Baptist Church, Roanoke, Virginia, September 29, 1997, 33.
\item[\textsuperscript{137}] Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, Book of Reports, \textit{Third Annual Meeting}, 21.
\item[\textsuperscript{138}] Morris Chapman, letter to SBCV Executive Director Doyle Chauncey, September 1996.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
conservatives launched out into uncharted waters. The letter, date October 1, 1996, validated SBCV's convention status by the SBC. This new course initiated a tremendous Kingdom impact that extended throughout Virginia, the SBC, and around the world.
The Transition Team of the SBCV began immediately addressing the issue facing the young convention. On October 31, 1996, the team elected Kelly Burris as chairman and divided their task into seven specific workgroup areas: (1) Vision and Purpose; (2) Constitution and Bylaws; (3) Professional and Support Staff; (4) Facilities and Locations; (5) Programs and Ministries; (6) Legal and Financial; and (7) Communication and Denominational Relations. After deciding on eight guiding objectives, the Team began the tedious work of drafting and implementing its assigned task.

Conservative churches around Virginia began writing and calling the SBCV seeking information concerning its purpose, official affiliation, and to establish how messengers were to be calculated for individual churches for the annual meeting. Much of the sought after information was addressed in the Constitution and Bylaws of the SBCV. Article V, 2(a) and 4(a) specifically deals with affiliation and messenger count respectively. A church desiring to partner with the SBCV must have its congregation vote on the matter, send a formal letter addressed to Doyle Chauncey stating its desire, and begin to contribute financially to and/or through the SBCV. Affiliated churches are entitled to two messengers. They also qualify for additional messengers for every $250 given to the convention up to a maximum of fifteen.

Equally important to the Transition Team was securing contractual agreements with the Annuity Board (renamed GuideStone, June 2004). A meeting between representatives from the Annuity Board and officers from the SBCV took place on
November 12, 1996. The signed contract would take effect on January 1, 1997. "The contract authorizes the SBCV to pay retirement and survivor benefits for eligible pastors and staff affiliated with the SBCV. The benefits include life insurance up to $100,000, disability insurance of $400 per month, and matching retirement contributions up to $17.50 per month." Pastors and staff members rested easier knowing that the retirement contributions were being handled appropriately.

Shortly thereafter, on November 14, 1996, the SBCV Executive Committee rallied for a meeting at the Missionary Learning Center located in beautiful Rockville, Virginia. The agenda consisted of a report from the Transition Team, dispersing information about the agreement and the starting date with the Annuity Board, the discussion of a survey form to be mailed to churches in order to determine their alignment status, and an agreement regarding local associations. The meeting was filled with great excitement about future endeavors. To the delight of conservatives, things were falling into place much faster than they expected.\footnote{Doyle Chauncey, "SBCV Executive Committee Meeting," \textit{The Baptist Banner}, Vol. IX, No. 10, Nov/Dec 1996.}

As the Transition Team waded through the maze of material, people graciously responded to its ongoing requests. In framing a new mission/purpose statement, the group was able to glean ideas from other state conventions, including information obtained from the NAMB. In addition, a survey was mailed to all pastors from aligned churches. After tabulating the results, the group requested that the following purpose statement be added to the Constitution: "As an autonomous state convention cooperating

\footnote{\textit{SBCV Set to Handle Annuities}, \textit{The Baptist Banner}, Vol. IX, No. 10, Nov/Dec 1996.}
with the Southern Baptist Convention, the purpose of the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia is to assist churches in Virginia and surrounding areas in effectively proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ, starting new churches, and ministering to all people in the name of Christ.”

The Transition Team soon realized that the Constitution and Bylaws needed to reflect that the SBCV was now a state convention. Such a realization led the group to commission the Constitution and Bylaws Committee to either replace or amend the existing documents. With input from the Transition Team, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee began overhauling the original documents. It was determined that the Executive Committee should be renamed the Executive Board. An Operations Manual was developed to handle frequent changes as the organization expanded. Amendments to this document only required Executive Board approval. A provision empowering the Executive Board to organize into working committees and sub-committees was also included. In the end, a revised version of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee was presented to the Executive Committee.\footnote{Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, Book of Reports, Annual Meeting, 35.}

Next, attention was directed toward both professional and support staff. As a result of a recent survey, approval was given to develop an organizational chart and job descriptions. Upon approval by the messengers at the 1997 Annual Meeting, the SBCV would immediately begin searching for a Missions Coordinator, an Education and Church Program Coordinator, an Evangelism Assistant, an Administrative Assistant, a receptionist, and an office secretary. A search was initiated for a central, strategically-

\footnote{Ibid., 36.}
based location. Since Richmond, Virginia was centrally located within the state, it was determined that the SBCV administrative office should be moved from Virginia Beach to the Richmond area. The new location would prove to be a great place for serving churches around the state.\footnote{Ibid., 37-39.}

Regarding programs and ministries, the Transition Team and Executive Committee were very careful not to fall into the quagmire of bureaucracy. Every additional new program or ministry required a matching purpose and a trained volunteer or staff person to oversee the work. A program calendar of activities was soon developed. It was also strongly recommended that the convention purchase an internet website with the address www.sbcv.org. Taking advantage of the new technology would enhance communications, missions, evangelism, and education. The Executive Director was encouraged to develop and enlist the help of volunteer regional coordinators. This network greatly enhanced the SBCV's effectiveness.\footnote{Ibid., 39-40.}

Furthermore, Jim Guenther, long-time legal counsel for the SBC and other state conventions, was asked to assist the SBCV during the transition and to eventually become its legal counsel. Meanwhile, financial records for years 1993 through 1996 were reviewed by Jim Taylor, Treasurer at Kempsville Baptist Church, Virginia Beach, and Barry Lacono, Treasurer at First Baptist Church, Norfolk. Their diligent service found the financial statements to be accurate. Likewise, the Executive Director and the Finance Committee were also directed to establish an SBCV Foundation and review the
insurance policy in order to insure adequate liability coverage. The new convention was beginning to take shape.\footnote{Ibid., 40-41.}

Equally important to the SBCV was its ability to communicate. With confirmation from the SBC Executive Committee, the Transition Team began meeting with officials from the Home Mission Board, the Annuity Board, Baptist Sunday School Board, and the Foreign Mission Board in order to establish future working relationships with each organization. Media professionals were hired to prepare printed materials and a promotional video to better communicate the vision and purpose of the SBCV. All published materials displayed the new logo and purpose statement of the convention. It was also suggested that a strategy plan be immediately developed for the twenty-first century.\footnote{Ibid., 41-43.}

In the meantime, Executive Director Doyle Chauncey began addressing and promoting the need for new conservative churches in Virginia. On February 3, 1997, Dr. Chauncey addressed a group of more than two hundred and fifty people at a regional meeting in Bassett, Virginia. The crowd gathered at First Baptist Church to hear their new Executive Director exclaim, "the immediate SBCV vision is for starting new churches in Virginia, 1000 in the next ten years, as well as strengthening existing churches. We are working with the Home Mission Board and Southeastern and Southern seminaries to help us with the task."\footnote{Rodney Houston, “Conservative Meeting in Bassett Well Attended,” The Baptist Banner, Vol. X, No. 3, March 1997.} He went on to challenge one hundred
conservative churches to each plant one church in a year. From its founding, SBCV had a vision of starting a church planting movement in Virginia and around the world.

One of the items receiving serious discussion was the word "conservative" within the SBCV name. Mild objections to the use of the word were voiced as early as the establishment of the Fellowship at Old Forest Road Baptist Church on January 28, 1993. Initially, Howard Baldwin opposed using the word "conservative" for two reasons. First, the word had been badly misused and misrepresented by opposing groups. And second, the word was like waving a red flag in front of a bull. He was afraid that the word would "scare off" churches seeking to align themselves with the SBCV. At first, Rev. Baldwin was more supportive of the name being changed to the Southern Baptist Convention of Virginia. Such a name would immediately identify the state convention with the SBC.148

Another person weighing in on a possible name change was Rodney Houston, pastor of Chatmoss Baptist Church, Martinsville, Virginia and chairman of the SBCV's Public Relations Committee. In a lengthy article published in The Banner, he offered his opinion by saying:

A name change would clearly indicate a change of direction for the group. Some might object to omitting the word “Conservative.” We are not ashamed to be called conservatives, but do we really need to use the word to define our new state convention? The SBC has established itself firmly as a “conservative” convention. SBCV folks used the word while we were a fellowship to distinguish our differences with liberal doctrines found in various places at the BGAV. Now that we are a convention, fully supportive of the SBC, we should project biblical conservatism as mainstream for Southern Baptists. The grass roots of Southern

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Baptists and our rich heritage have always been conservative. We do not now need to distinguish ourselves with the label.\footnote{Rodney Houston, "Opinion: SBCV Objectives Have Changed," \textit{The Baptist Banner}, Vol. X, No. 3, March 1997.}

Because of conservative resurgence among Southern Baptists both at the national level and in Virginia, many were simply opposed to removing the word "conservative" from the name. As T. C. Pinckney pointed out, "The word “conservative” in our name establishes our theological stance immediately and unequivocally."\footnote{Ibid.} Thus the name proudly remained, Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia.

\textit{The Banner} was first to announce the first Annual Meeting of the new state convention. The meeting was scheduled for Monday, September 29, 1997 at Green Ridge Baptist Church, Roanoke, Virginia. Messengers would be faced with many decisions such as adopting a new Constitution and Bylaws, electing officers and committee members, voting on a proposed budget, and implementing the report from the Transition Team. The air was buzzing with excitement. The year had proven to be extremely busy for the Executive Committee, the Transition Team, and most of all the Executive Director, Doyle Chauncey.

A year had passed, and messengers were ready to take the necessary steps to move the SBCV Fellowship into a full-fledged state convention. After congregational singing, an opening prayer, and a welcome by the host pastor, Dr. Mike Palmer, president Terry Harper called the meeting to order at approximately 2:00 p.m. Kelly Burris, chairman of the Transition Team, presented the Transition Report. The report analyzed and outlined the necessary steps for transitioning the SBCV Fellowship into a fully
functional autonomous state convention. The messengers voted unanimously and enthusiastically to accept the report.\textsuperscript{151}

The atmosphere of the event was electrifying. The entire convention was dominated by a sweet spirit of unity. Messengers exuded an attitude that clearly displayed their evangelistic thrust and passion for missions. After a few minor adjustments and typographical corrections, a revised Constitution and Bylaws was presented to the messengers for their consideration and vote. At this point, T. C. Pinckney offered an amendment. He called attention to Article V, Section C, Point 3 which states, "This provision for individual affiliation shall expire October 1, 2000. All other statements herein referring to individual affiliation shall be nullified October 1, 2000."\textsuperscript{152} Pinckney's amendment sought to have this removed from the Constitution and Bylaws.

After speaking to the amendment, considerable debate ensued. Discussion focused on:

- the unique situation conservative Virginia Baptists have been in, on the strong support these individuals have rendered, often at considerable personal cost, and on the small number of people involved. Opponents of the amendment argued that in the New Testament only churches took action and that it is long-standing Baptist practice that only churches belong to state conventions.\textsuperscript{153}

In the end, the measure was defeated by a thin margin, 235 no votes and 203 yes votes.

President Terry Harper redirected the messengers attention to the proposed Constitution

\textsuperscript{151} Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, Book of Reports, \textit{Annual Meeting}, 5.
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid., 5.
and Bylaws. Hearing no further discussion, the issue was put to a vote. In voting, messengers adopted the new Constitution and Bylaws unanimously.

Next, the Executive Director, Doyle Chauncey, was called upon to deliver his report to the body. In his report, Dr. Chauncey stated that "God has blessed us in such a marvelous way. If this past year is any indication, we are in for a glorious future...These are foundational years that call for extraordinary commitment and dedication. It is a very important and crucial time for the new convention." Moreover, the Treasurer's Report revealed impressive numbers and a steady rate of growth (Appendix B).

By 1997, the number of churches contributing to the SBCV had grown from 10 (1993) to 157 (1997). In like manner, the Cooperative Program giving had risen dramatically from $32,132 (1993) to an estimated $1,750,000 (1997). Approximately $716,000 was received in excess of the 1996 Budget. Dr. Chauncey proposed an allocation breakdown which messengers approved unanimously. He concluded his report by recasting the church planting vision. Dr. Chauncey challenged participating churches "to not rely on convincing churches to affiliate with the SBCV for growth, but rather, to rely on starting new churches as the foundation of growth in the SBCV."  

Messengers proceeded with the election of officers. Terry Harper (President), Kelly Burris (First Vice President), and David Eppling (Secretary) were all elected by unanimous vote. The only contested race was for Second Vice President between John Marks, pastor of Kingsland Baptist Church, Richmond, Virginia and Ricky Ewing, pastor of Pleasant View Baptist Church, Lynchburg, Virginia. A ballot vote elected John Marks

154 Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, Book of Reports, Annual Meeting, 25.
155 Ibid., 7-8.
as Second Vice President. Attention was then directed to the 1997-1998 Proposed
Budget of $1,660,000. To the delight of all and without discussion the budget was
enthusiastically and unanimously approved. Cody Lowe, religious writer for The
Roanoke Times & World News commented, "Although the new organization is about a
tenth the size of the Baptist General Association, it provides about thirty percent of the
money from the state that goes to the Southern Baptist Convention."\(^{156}\)

Furthermore, six resolutions received overwhelming support from messengers.
Three resolutions expressed deep appreciation for individuals while the other three dealt
with cultural issues. The resolution calling for the boycott of the Disney Company and
for standing against those who persecute Christians was unanimously passed without
discussion. However, Glen McLaughlin, pastor of Crossroads Baptist Church, Leesburg,
Virginia proposed an amendment to the resolution regarding the ordination and role of
women in ministry. The wording of the "BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED" section was
changed to read, "While we encourage the service of women in all aspects of church life
and work other than pastoral functions and leadership roles entailing ordination, we hold
that it is unscriptural for women to serve as pastors and deacons."\(^{157}\) With only one vote
against the resolution with the amendment, the measure passed.

The first Annual Meeting of the SBCV came to a close at approximately 8:45
p.m. on September 29, 1997. With a ratified Constitution and Bylaws in hand, the SBCV
prepared to face the unforeseen challenges of the future. The murky waters of the

\(^{156}\) Cody Lowe, "Baptists Best Their Budget Conservative Group Raises $700,000 Extra,"

\(^{157}\) Ibid., 10.
uncertain past had given way to new life and unlimited possibilities. Pinckney summed up the event by saying, "the convention was a wonderful experience for the Christ-honoring decisions which were made, for the spirit in which the entire two days were conducted, for the edifying messages brought, for the beautiful music enjoyed, and for the sacrifices of praise we laid before Jesus’ throne. If you didn’t make it this year, plan now to come next year in Virginia Beach.”

Immediately the Executive Board launched a campaign to hire several new professional staff members. By December 1997, the Executive Board had narrowed its search to four men. The goal was to have these men in place by January 1, 1998 to assist the Executive Director. Mark Baldwin and Ken Nienke were hired as church growth consultants. Their primary responsibilities included developing, implementing, and evaluating Christian growth and health strategies for churches. Mark Baldwin, located in Richmond, served churches in the east while Nienke operated out of Roanoke to serve churches in the west. Kenny Gooch was employed as a missions consultant with an emphasis on church planting. He was strategically located in Newport News, and assisted by a church planting apprentice, Derek Evatt. Mark Reon was hired as an evangelism consultant whose primary responsibility was to high school and college campuses.

The SBCV was also serious about its commitment to church planting. It was well on its way to meeting the goal of one hundred new churches by the year 2000. By May

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1998, nine churches in nine different locations throughout Virginia were involved in planting a new church. Starting new churches was embedded within the mission statement of the SBCV. Dr. Chauncey often commented that "Pastors must not only see the vision of starting new churches, but lead their church to make a commitment to start one. Every new church start needs a sponsoring church, and it will not happen until the pastor takes the initiative." SBCV realized very early that its lifeblood and growth would be connected and indelibly linked to existing churches planting other churches.

The SBCV continued to experience God's hand of blessing while the BGAV was experiencing a tremendous financial crunch as more and more churches were aligning themselves with the SBCV. In response to having two state conventions, the editor of the Religious Herald, Michael Clingenpeel, revealed a keen insight into the present situation when he writes:

Finally, churches are being forced by many circumstances to clarify their identities, and as the BGAV begins its 176th year, its identity is never clearer. The existence of another Baptist state convention in Virginia is forcing Virginia Baptist congregations to do some self-assessment and decide which of the two more nearly matches their values. This is an especially painful process for congregations which have made no effort over the past two decades to stay informed about denominational matters. It is, however, inevitable, and churches are wise to get on with it.\footnote{Michael Clingenpeel, "BGAV at 175 -- hold or sell?" Religious Herald, November 19, 1998.}

The SBCV had already made the decision "to get on with it," and many churches were either contemplating or choosing to move forward. However, as churches aligned themselves with the SBCV, the BGAV continued to pursue its liberal agenda.

\footnote{Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, Book of Reports, Annual Meeting, Spotswood Baptist Church, Fredericksburg, Virginia, October 27, 1998, 38.}
The SBCV 1998 Annual Meeting took place at Spotswood Baptist Church in Fredericksburg, Virginia on October 27. During the Executive Director's Report, Dr. Chauncey informed messengers that the SBCV office had been successfully moved from Virginia Beach to Glen Allen. Glen Allen, Virginia (near Richmond), would eventually become the home of the SBCV. Its central location was ideal for effective ministry with partnering churches. Later, Dr. Chauncey reported that NAMB had appointed a church planter to assist the SBCV. He also introduced each staff member along with a new addition, Sue Sawyer.

Sue Sawyer was hired as a women's ministry/missions consultant. In a personal letter obtained by *The Banner*, Mrs. Sawyer explains that her responsibilities are to:

1. Interface with convention staff in coordinating the work of Women's Ministries related to the program of work of LifeWay Christian Resources of the SBC.
2. Interface with convention staff in coordinating the work of women's missions with the primary emphasis on mission's education, mission involvement, and volunteer missions for women and young girls.
3. Recruit and provide supervision for volunteers assigned to the programs of work relating to women and young girls.
4. Lead and/or coordinate women's conferences and seminars, and provide consultation in churches, missions, associations, and/or regions.
5. Give leadership to the area of work in such a way as to inspire colleagues and fellow workers in the churches toward higher levels of personal Christian commitment, witness, and ministry.
6. Recruit and coordinate volunteer regional Women's Ministry/Missions leaders.
7. Interface with convention staff on joint convention projects/programs/events.\(^\text{162}\)

It did not take long for churches to realize that Mrs. Sawyer had a deep passion for ministering to women.

Dr. Chauncey continued with his report and outlined eight challenges immediately facing the SBCV. First, he zeroed in on the importance of starting new

churches. Second, the need for impacting the cities with the gospel must also be a priority. Third, contending for the biblical truth in a pluralistic culture must be accomplished in love. Fourth, advancing technology must be utilized in order to effectively draw people to the gospel. Fifth, distinguishing personal preference from biblical essentials will be a must for reaching a new generation. Sixth, the key to reaching beyond the walls of the church is the mobilization of lay leaders. Seventh, the need to communicate the essential biblical role women play within the body of Christ is a must. Eighth, a need exists for educating future generations about the cooperative power of churches working together.\textsuperscript{163}

Records indicate that there were 587 registered messengers from 136 churches plus 197 registered guests. In light of the large attendance, T. C. Pinckney commented that "many guests did not register, for the auditorium seats 1,500 and Bob R. Melvin, senior pastor of Spotswood, estimated at one point that there were between 1,100 and 1,200 present."\textsuperscript{164} Messengers were excited to hear that the SBCV had received over one million dollars above budgeted receipts for 1997. Much of the money would be used for church planting. Dr. Chauncey exclaimed "that the SBCV had the highest contribution percentage to SBC causes of any state convention."\textsuperscript{165} It was evident that God was indeed blessing this new, young convention.

During the first business session, messengers unanimously voted to accept fifty-four new churches into the convention. Forty-two were uniquely aligned with the SBCV  

\textsuperscript{163} Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, Book of Reports, Annual Meeting, 38-39.  
\textsuperscript{165} Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, Book of Reports, Annual Meeting, 23.
while ten were dually aligned with both conventions. The SBCV membership now stood at 212 churches. At this point in time, the budget began to be referred to as the "Missions and Ministry Plan." John Simms, chairman of the Business and Finance Committee and Budget Committee, proposed to the messengers a $3.5 million dollar spending plan. Simms discussed the use of the excess funds ($910,000) from previous years. This money along with another $1.84 million dollars (proposed budget items for the next two years) would be seed money for helping churches start new churches. "John Simms reported the required resources to adequately fund a new church start were estimated at $50,000 from the SBCV and $12,000 from NAMB (for the first year only)." 166 The Mission and Ministry Plan was adopted unanimously.

Once again the need for church planting was addressed in a tangible yet visual format. Interspersed throughout the business proceedings were seven interviews with SBCV church planters. Dr. Chauncey conducted each interview and clearly demonstrated the need for existing churches to be involved. The interviews were exceptionally compelling and often convicting. The church planting vision of the SBCV was beginning to materialize.

At one point, during the afternoon session, Dr. John Powers, pastor of First Baptist Church, Norfolk, was introduced to discuss the FAITH Sunday School Evangelism Strategy. For many churches, this was their first contact with the new program. A training seminar was planned for January 22-26, 1999 at First Baptist, Norfolk. Within the year, the SBCV churches using the FAITH Sunday School Evangelism Strategy were ranked second (nationally) among SBC churches in baptism.

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166 Ibid., 24.
More than one third of the churches had taken advantage of the training. A heart for evangelism had once again begun to take root. Mark Baldwin praised God for the evangelistic success. He went on to say, "It's one thing to have an evangelistic mission statement and quite another to attempt to fulfill it. But that seems to be what's happening."167

The 1998 Annual Meeting was filled with exciting moments as messengers were reminded that all the success experienced by the SBCV had come directly from God. Against this backdrop, the messengers elected new officers for the coming year. All four of the following men were elected by acclamation: Dr. Kelly Burris, who served as first vice president during the previous year, was elected president; Dr. John Marks, who served the previous year as second vice president, was elected first vice president; Rev. Rodney Houston, pastor of Chatmoss Baptist Church, Martinsville, was elected second vice president; and Rev. David Eppling was re-elected as secretary.168 The annual meeting came to a close under the powerful preaching of Dr. Paige Patterson.

Beginning in late November 1998, the SBCV moved from an original newsletter format to producing a bi-monthly magazine called the Proclaimer. Initially, households receiving The Banner also received a copy of the new Proclaimer. T. C. Pinckney encouraged the SBCV to use the Banner's mailing list to launch the Proclaimer. According to the SBCV website, "The Proclaimer, our flagship communication piece, allows us to communicate the ministries that are taking place in Virginia through the

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167 "SBCV 2nd in Baptisms among All State Conventions," The Baptist Banner, Vol. XII, No. 8, September 1999.

168 Ibid., 32.
SBCV and its churches. The communication is intended to educate, inform, inspire, and equip readers to participate in further ministry opportunities.”

From this date forward, the *Proclaimer* became a powerful communication tool and a conservative voice for the SBCV and its affiliated churches. The name, *Proclaimer*, was adopted from Liberty Baptist Church’s (Appomattox, Virginia) newsletter. Dr. Chauncey recalls, ”the *Proclaimer* . . . would not be an independent paper. In fact we decided that the independent paper is *The Banner*. Our paper is going to be a missions magazine and it’s going to tell the story of what we’re doing.” As computer technology advanced, the graphic capability of the magazine greatly enhanced the overall quality of the literature. Its visual appeal, personal testimonies, up-coming events, and up-to-date church planting information were enthusiastically received by its readers.

Exciting and encouraging, the year 1999 was filled with God's blessings upon the SBCV. The cold lifeless data was translated into a real kingdom impact. As the evangelistic fire began sweeping across Virginia, lives were changed by the power of the gospel. Forty-one more churches had made the decision to apply for membership with the SBCV, and thirteen of these were requesting unique alignment. By the annual meeting, the total number of churches affiliated with the SBCV had reached 253. The number would soon reach 273 because twenty new church plants were already in

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170 Doyle Chauncey, Interview.
progress. The SBCV was certainly sticking by its commitment to start new mission churches.

The 1999 Annual Meeting of the SBCV was held at West Salem Baptist Church, Salem, Virginia, October 12. The theme for the convention was entitled "Partners in the Harvest." The atmosphere was once again electrifying. The gathering consisted of 514 messengers from 147 churches.\textsuperscript{171} The Executive Director-Treasurer's Report revealed an on-going commitment to church planting as well as to the Cooperative Program. Dr. Chauncey challenged SBCV churches to increase their Cooperative Program giving to at least ten percent. He stated further, "I believe that if churches will demonstrate that kind of responsible stewardship, their congregations will rise to the same level of commitment, and the SBCV will 'raise the bar' for other state conventions to do likewise."\textsuperscript{172} Over the past year, the SBCV's Cooperative Program giving had increased by an impressive 26.8%.

Dr. Chauncey further related SBCV's commitment to both missions in Virginia and around the world. Unlike other state conventions, financial resources were readily available for mission, ministries, and evangelism around the state. Currently, 43.3% was divided among church leadership, administration, campus evangelism, shared ministries, partnerships, and church planting. Including both designated and undesignated gifts, over 5 million had been given through the SBCV. Among other state conventions, the

\textsuperscript{171} Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, Book of Reports, \textit{Annual Meeting: Partners in the Harvest}, West Salem Baptist Church, Salem, Virginia, October 12, 1999.

\textsuperscript{172} Ibid., 21.
percentage that remained in the state could reach in access of 60%. However, the SBCV was holding on to 37% while forwarding 63% to the SBC.

The proposed Missions and Ministry Plan 2000 (budget) revealed an impressive increase of 17.14%. The budget was estimated to be 4.1 million. Dr. Chauncey acknowledged that "Total projected funds flowing through the SBCV from undesignated and designated gifts will exceed $5.7 million next year." During the time for voting on the budget, messengers unanimously adopted the new spending plan. Like the previous year, 63% would find its way to the SBC Cooperative Program and 37% would stay in Virginia for missions and ministries within the state.

With Y2K just around the corner, churches were challenged to take full advantage of new technologies in order to improve communications, enhance visibility, and foster high impact ministries. Unknowingly, Dr. Chauncey made a prophetic proclamation. He exclaimed, "Churches unwilling to change methods and styles of ministries, giving up personal preferences, will have little or no impact on the culture in the 21st century." Technological advancements have proven him right. Churches that focus primarily on people with culturally based ministries are the ones advancing the Kingdom well into the future.

In the afternoon business session, messengers turned their attention to the election of officers. Kelly Burris, pastor of Kempsville Baptist Church, Virginia Beach, was re-elected SBCV president by acclamation. He would serve for one more year. David Johnson, pastor of Rileyville Baptist Church, was elected first vice president by

\[\text{\textsuperscript{173}}\text{Ibid., 22.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{174}}\text{Ibid., 23.}\]
acclamation. Timothy Piland, pastor of Nansemond River Baptist Church, Portsmouth, was elected second vice president by acclamation. Michael Palmer, pastor of Green Ridge Baptist Church, Roanoke, was elected secretary. With these new leaders in place, the SBCV was prepared to face the unknown challenges of the 21st century.

Once again controversy erupted between the BGAV and the SBCV. During the president's address at the BGAV's Annual Meeting in November 1999, outgoing president, William Watson, accused the SBCV "of attracting churches through a campaign of 'disinformation' and coercion." He expressed frustration over twenty-five churches leaving the BGAV to join the SBCV and taking over $250,000 with them. Doyle Chauncey denied that the SBCV was purposefully conducting a smear campaign against the BGAV. In reference to the SBCV representatives sharing information at BGAV churches, Chauncey said, "We make a good-faith effort only to share information about ourselves . . . We want to walk beside them . . . as a complementary convention . . . and not continue the conflict and controversy." The continuing loss of revenue and churches to the SBCV did not sit well with the BGAV leadership.

Between Executive Board meetings, the SBCV conducted business through an Administrative Committee. This committee, composed of convention officers and the Executive Director/Treasurer, met monthly. On November 15-16, 1999, the Administrative Committee recommended to the Executive Board a new structure composed of four teams. The new structure streamlined the Board into the following


176 Ibid.
four teams: Management Team for financial and business matters, Kelly Burris chairman; 
Multiplication Team for church planting and evangelism, David Johnson chairman; 
Ministries Team for church leadership, ministries and health, Michael Palmer chairman; 
and Mobilization Team for missions, shared ministries and partnerships, Tim Piland 
chairman. This breakdown was approved by the Executive Board.¹⁷⁷

Two other exciting events happened during that same two-day meeting. First, the 
trustees of Liberty University had sent a letter on behalf of the university to Doyle 
Chauncey requesting affiliation with the SBCV and the SBC. "After much discussion 
and prayer, . . . the Executive Board . . . unanimously approved the affiliation with the 
University on November 16."¹⁷⁸ The covenant did not commit any financial resources 
but provided prayer support, promotion, and encouragement. Second, a new office site 
received unanimous approval. Beginning January 2000, the SBCV would be located at 
"Suite 100 in the Liberty Mutual building . . . 4101 Cox Road. . . ."¹⁷⁹ SBCV 
headquarters is currently operating at this location near Richmond, Virginia.

Three months later, on February 28-29, 2000, the Executive Board approved three 
recommendations. First, Kenny Gooch's role as missions catalyst was reassigned to the 
Missions Mobilization Coordinator. Second, the Executive Director and the presiding 
SBCV president were appointed to serve as SBCV’s trustees on Liberty University's 
trustee board. The approved motion stated that successors to these two positions would 
automatically become SBCV trustees on Liberty University's trustee board. Third, the

¹⁷⁷ Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, Book of Reports, Annual Meeting: Speaking the 
Truth in Love, Liberty Baptist Church, Hampton, Virginia, October 9-10, 2000, 44.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 45.
end of the fiscal year was changed from September 30 to December 31, and the annual meeting would be held on the second Monday and Tuesday in November.\textsuperscript{180} 

With the new fiscal year structure in place, the 2001 Missions and Ministry Plan would need to cover a period of fifteen months. The once-named "Budget Committee" was now comprised of both the Administrative and Management Teams. During their April 25, 2000 meeting, the teams developed a proposed budget of $5,625,000. However, on May 15-16, fueled by lower than expected receipts, the projected 2001 budget was reduced to $5,400,000. The Administrative Committee also recognized the need for a second evangelism associate. As a result, Bill White was approved by the Management Team and the Executive Board as the new Evangelism Associate. His position was jointly funded by the SBCV and NAMB. White's expertise added a new dimension to the SBCV's internet capabilities and personal evangelism.\textsuperscript{181} 

One month prior to the SBCV's Annual Meeting, the Executive Committee approved a recommendation from the Management Team that would have a huge impact on the future of the SBCV. The recommendation provided seed money for two subsidiaries formed earlier that year. The approval distributed "$500,000 to SBCV Financial Services, Inc. as beginning capital for extending church loans, and $100,000 to the SBC of Virginia Foundation to help establish a foundation to assist SBCV churches in estate planning and to provide funds for the future of both local churches and the

\textsuperscript{180} Ibid. 
\textsuperscript{181} Ibid., 46.
The potential of these two subsidiaries to provide both immediate and long-range assistance to local churches and the SBCV was enormous.

The 2000 Annual Meeting of the SBCV took place on October 9-10 at Liberty Baptist Church, Hampton, Virginia. The meeting was called to order by President Kelly Burris. Shortly thereafter, Alan Streett, professor at Criswell College, Dallas, Texas, delivered a message on the theme "Speaking the Truth in Love." In like manner, Doyle Chauncey presented the Executive Director/Treasurer's Report emphasizing a number of incredible events that had taken place during the year leading up to the convention. Brian Autry had been hired to replace Jimmy Fogleman as the Campus Evangelism Coordinator. Autry's main responsibilities and passion included training, equipping, and encouraging student pastors. Dr. Chauncey went on to introduce Dr. Geoff Hammond as a Church Planting Strategist in the Tidewater region. Dr. Hammond would be jointly funded by SBCV, NAMB, and First Baptist Church, Norfolk. His expertise was also well utilized by the SBCV Church Planting Management Team.

Messengers listened intently as Dr. Chauncey presented new church applications for membership with the SBCV. Forty-one churches were requesting affiliation: thirty-four uniquely and seven dually. Messengers eagerly adopted the request raising the total number of aligned churches to 292. It was pointed out that two churches were no longer affiliated with the SBCV. One rejoined the BGAV while the other was dissolved and removed from the records. The report also addressed the revised Baptist Faith & Message (BFM) adopted overwhelmingly by messengers at the SBC Annual Meeting in

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182 Ibid., 47.
Orlando, June 14, 2000. The revisions would impact every church in the SBC and particularly conservative churches in Virginia.

The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship voiced its displeasure with the new document. Dr. Chauncey told messengers that the CBF was "planning to distribute information throughout Virginia Southern Baptist churches accusing the SBC of worshipping the Bible and relegating Jesus to a position beneath the scriptures." He further added, "Of course, there is nothing further from the truth. The truth is that liberals have used the phrase 'The criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ,' which is found in the 1963 BFM, as carte blanche to place their interpretation and personal experience above that of the Bible." The battle for the Bible continued to rage. However, the SBCV made it abundantly clear where it stood on the BFM 2000 by unanimously adopting a strong resolution supporting the revised edition.

Later in the meeting, Dr. Chauncey offered the Treasurer's Report. To everyone's delight, he reported that the undesignated receipts would exceed the $3.9 million budget. He further demonstrated how more and more churches were choosing the 50/50 distribution plan between the SBC and the SBCV. He exclaimed, "I believe this reflects an increasing level of confidence in the missions and evangelism strategy of the SBCV . . . Our pledge from the beginning was to work toward reducing and maintaining administrative costs to single-digits or less than 10 percent of total undesignated receipts from the churches." In his closing remarks, he reminded messengers of the challenges

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183 Ibid., 35.
184 Ibid., 35-36.
185 Ibid., 37.
facing the convention. The challenge was to recruit qualified and experienced church planting strategists, match them with existing churches that were willing to start a new work, help churches resolve conflicts in a biblical fashion, and educate future generations about the importance of the Cooperative Program.

During the afternoon business session, attention focused on the election of officers and the budget proposal. All four of the following men were elected by acclamation: president, Dr. John Marks, pastor of Kingsland Baptist Church, Richmond; first vice president, John Simms, member of First Baptist Church, Roanoke; second vice president, Dr. Gary Burden, pastor of Bethany Place Baptist, Richmond; and secretary, Reverend Doug Echols, pastor of Enon Baptist Church, Chester. The proposed fifteen-month Missions and Ministry Plan of $5.4 million (undesignated) was adopted unanimously. Messengers also wholeheartedly approved two indispensable resolutions. One displayed their undying commitment to the Cooperative Program and the other stated a strong stance against abortion in any form.

By the end of 2000, Ken Nienke resigned as the SBCV Church Planting Coordinator to pursue a church planting opportunity in the Roanoke area. Nienke's departure left a void in the leadership at the SBCV. However, the task of church planting burned deep within the hearts of many. SBCV forged ahead with its church planting endeavors. The need for strong leadership was apparent, and in January 2001, the SBCV extended an invitation to Dr. Geoffrey Hammond to be the Interim Church Planting Coordinator. Dr. Hammond accepted the position, and soon the SBCV would greatly benefit from his leadership skills and abilities.
In early 2001, the Executive Board appointed a group known as The Strategy Planning Executive Task Force (ETF). "Because of [the] growing needs, [the] convention had the foresight to investigate the components and design a comprehensive strategic plan."¹⁸⁶ The group was challenged to develop a structure that would propel the SBCV into the 21st century. The group consisted of the following people:

Dr. John Powers, pastor, First Baptist Church, Norfolk, chairman  
Rev. Ronnie Brown, pastor, Swift Creek Baptist Church, Midlothian  
Dr. Charles Fuller, pastor emeritus, First Baptist Church, Roanoke  
Rev. Terry Harper, pastor, Colonial Heights Baptist, Colonial Heights  
Dr. Bob Melvin, pastor, Spotswood Baptist Church, Fredericksburg  
Mr. Archie Smith, layman, Kempsville Baptist Church, Virginia Beach  
Dr. Doyle Chauncey, Executive Director/Treasurer of the SBCV  
Dr. John Marks, pastor, Kingsland Baptist Church, Richmond and president of the SBCV, ex-officio member

The team spent countless hours collecting information from pastors and laymen alike. It was the desire of the SBCV for the new strategy to be birthed from among churches and not from within the convention.¹⁸⁷

After several months, the ETF began analyzing and drawing conclusions from the massive amount of collected information. During its meeting in February 2001, the team reviewed the survey results submitted from 194 pastors, church staff, and lay leaders. In addition, over one hundred people converged on the SBCV headquarters to offer their recommendations to the ETF members. "In all, over 722 people were consulted or invited to participate in the initial stage of hearing from church members."¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, Book of Reports, Annual Meeting: Celebrating our Distinctiveness, Grove Avenue Baptist Church, Richmond, Virginia, November 13-14, 2001, 75.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.
point, the ETF began to develop a purpose statement and core values for the SBCV. The ongoing work of the group marked the beginning of decentralization.

Among all of the questions in the survey, one stood out. The question reads, "In your opinion which name best represents the SBCV? (1) Southern Baptist Convention of Virginia; (2) Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia; or (3) Southern Baptist Churches." By a large majority (69%), members favored keeping the original name, Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia. Although, it is interesting to note that all of the promotional materials and correspondences produced by the SBCV were simply labeled, SBC of Virginia. After five years of operating as a state convention, the name of the organization was settled once and for all. The SBCV would henceforth be known as the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia (SBC of Virginia).

During its March 2001 meeting, the ETF carefully studied critical information obtained from the 1990 Census of Virginia. Along with the listening sessions and surveys, these environmental factors became a vital piece for designing a strategy for the SBCV's future. In an effort to utilize the massive amount of information, the group proposed the establishment of various teams to concentrate on different aspects of the organization. Team A focused on strengthening existing churches while Team B examined the issue of missions. Team C directed its attention to the issue of supporting church staff while teams D and E investigated issues including the Executive Board and SBCV staff personnel. The refining work of decentralizing the SBCV was aggressively moving forward.

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189 Strategic Planning Taskforce of the SBCV, Survey of Churches and Members, Results, February 2001.
Approximately one month prior to the SBCV Annual Meeting, the Executive Board gathered on October 16, 2001 in order to finalize the annual meeting's agenda and to discuss the long anticipated strategy proposal by the ETF. The strategy called for a decentralization of the SBCV ministries and services. The ETF presented the Executive Board with a refined purpose statement, five core values, and six intentional objectives. The board not only unanimously approved the recommendation, it also approved an Implementation Task Force (ITF) to assist the Executive Director/Treasurer in carrying out the strategic plan. Soon, messengers would also approve the same measure.

The fifth annual meeting of the SBCV took place at Grove Avenue Baptist Church, Richmond on November 13, 2001. Minutes of the meeting revealed that there were 685 registered messengers from 172 church and 135 guests.\footnote{Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, Book of Reports, 18.} During his Executive Board report, Dr. Doyle Chauncey reminded messengers just how important it is for believers to remain faithful to the Word of God. He stated, "We are just one or two generations away from seeing Virginia return to its biblically conservative roots. Our future is bright, and the SBCV is here to stay, and God is going to bless."\footnote{Ibid.}

Furthermore, forty-five churches were enthusiastically voted into membership, raising the total number of churches aligned with the SBCV to 330. Also during the meeting, messengers approved the 2002 Missions and Ministry Plan of 5 million.

Under the direction and leadership of Dr. Geoff Hammond, the SBCV began to emphasize church planting in a unique way. An Eagle Award was designed to be presented to each individual church that planted a new church. At the 2001 Annual
Meeting, Dr. Hammond honored twelve churches with an Eagle. In his report, Dr. Hammond said that "The key to our church planting movement is for every church in our convention, whatever its size, to be involved in church planting in some way. Involvement includes prayer, sending volunteers to help our new church starts, identifying church planters, and sponsoring or co-sponsoring a new church start."\(^{192}\)

The highlight of the Annual Meeting came during the afternoon business session when The Strategic Planning Task Force gave its report. The report mapped out a new direction for the SBCV. Dr. John Powers, chairman of the ETF, began the report with initial comments, then he called upon Dr. Bob Melvin to introduce the SBCV Purpose Statement. This document simply stated: The Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia is a fellowship of Southern Baptist churches cooperating to assist local congregations in their task of fulfilling the Great Commission. Rev. Rodney Houston made a motion to add the statement, *as commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ*, to the end of the purpose statement. Messengers enthusiastically endorsed the motion, and by doing so, the SBCV had a concise purpose statement.\(^{193}\)

Next, Charles Fuller introduced messengers to the five Core Values of the SBCV via video. These core values framed the convention's deeply held convictions and clearly showed how churches work together in a cooperative effort. The core values are as follows: Our foundation is based on the Word of God; Our fellowship is built on healthy relationships; Our focus is strengthening the local church; Our function is to assist churches to be on missions; and Our future includes church planting. A bit later, T. C.

\(^{192}\) Ibid., 61.

\(^{193}\) Ibid., 25, 76.
Pinckney made a recommendation that the first core value be changed to read, Our foundation is the Word of God. The committee agreed to the change, and thus the core values were born.\textsuperscript{194}

Archie Smith and Terry Harper were called upon to present the six SBCV Strategic Objectives. Mr. Smith elaborated on the first three objectives while Rev. Terry Harper clarified the last three. Based on a wide variety of feedback from pastors, church staff, and lay leaders, the objectives were crafted. These objectives established the parameters for the convention. They are as follows:

1. Strengthen existing churches
   1.1. by providing opportunities for leadership development
   1.2. by providing equipping for Sunday School leaders
   1.3. by providing training in evangelism strategies
   1.4. by providing stewardship and mission education
   1.5. by providing church strategic planning (rearticulation)

2. Support pastor, staff, and their families
   2.1. by providing mentoring, accountability and spiritual development
   2.2. by providing marriage and family enrichment
   2.3. by providing ministry relationship skills training
   2.4. by developing conflict management skills
   2.5. by facilitating placement for pastors and staff
   2.6. by providing student ministerial scholarships

3. Start new churches
   3.1. by enlisting sponsor churches
   3.2. by recruiting and developing planters
   3.3. by providing financial resources
   3.4. by prioritizing areas for church planting
   3.5. by providing demographic analysis and research

4. Educate and mobilize church volunteers in SBC cooperative missions
   4.1. by networking and mobilizing local church key leaders
   4.2. by utilizing missions specialists to assist local churches
   4.3. by providing a missions web page
   4.4. by developing missions partnerships among the churches

\textsuperscript{194} Ibid.
4.5. by networking to provide aid in disaster relief efforts

5. Develop comprehensive financial strategies
   5.1. by developing SBCV Foundation Inc.
   5.2. by developing SBCV Financial Services Inc.
   5.3. by educating churches concerning the Cooperative Program
   5.4. by providing resources for church financial planning and legal services

6. Develop the structure and resources to fulfill the objectives of the SBCV
   6.1. by developing effective communication with local churches
   6.2. by promoting SBCV information and education
   6.3. by facilitating convention relationships
   6.4. by planning and administering budget and calendar
   6.5. by decentralizing organization delivery system

These objectives gave a clear direction for the future of the SBCV. The amended report was received by acclamation.\textsuperscript{195}

The convention officers elected for 2002 were: John Marks, president and pastor of Kingsland Baptist Church, Richmond; Dennis Culbreth, first vice president and pastor of River Oak Church, Chesapeake; Jim Smith, second vice president and pastor of Second Baptist Church, South Boston; and Doug Echols, secretary and pastor of Enon Baptist Church, Chester. It was abundantly clear that the SBCV would continue to place a major emphasis on church planting and evangelism. The fifth annual meeting came to a close with a stirring message from SBC President and pastor of First Baptist, Snellville, Georgia, James Merritt.\textsuperscript{196}

\textsuperscript{195} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{196} Ibid., 26.
Chapter Four

The Impact of Decentralization

Shortly after the 2001 SBCV Annual Meeting, the Implementation Task Force (ITF) along with the Executive Director/Treasurer began executing the strategic plan. Members of the ITF included Dr. Kelly Burris, chairman and pastor of Kempsville Baptist Church, Virginia Beach; Rick Elmore, pastor of Cave Springs Baptist Church, Roanoke; Don Matthews, associate pastor of Swift Creek Baptist, Midlothian; Lin Perkins, member of Smith Memorial Baptist, Williamsburg; Dr. Tim Piland, pastor of Nansemond River Baptist, Suffolk; Chip Roberson, pastor of Bethel Baptist Church, Chesapeake; and Carl Weiser, pastor of Hyland Heights Baptist Church, Lynchburg. Messengers would be given a final report at the 2002 SBCV Annual Meeting.\(^\text{197}\)

Although the ITF was in place and began implementing the strategic plan, the Executive Task Force (ETF) continued "to serve in an accountability role to insure that the implementation would remain consistent with the adopted strategy."\(^\text{198}\) Over the next three years, the ETF proved to be indispensible. The ITF reported to the ETF, who in turn conveyed the information to the Executive Board for final approval. Their job was to define decentralization, convention structure, write job profiles and job descriptions, and support the Executive Director in the hiring of employees to fill . . . positions and . . . [to reallocate] . . . present staff. The ITF . . . [recommended] all necessary budget changes and financial allocations to implement the strategic

\(^{197}\) Ibid., 77.

\(^{198}\) Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, Book of Reports, *Annual Meeting: Completing the Task to Light Up Virginia & the World with the Gospel*, First Baptist Church, Roanoke, Virginia, November 11-12, 2002, 74.
The ITF [also made recommendations] regarding the Executive Board structure and [oversaw] necessary Constitutional changes.

A decentralized delivery system was beginning to take shape.

With well-defined ministry areas (north, east, central, west, and southwest), the SBCV deployed state missions to each area in order to more effectively serve local churches. Decentralization brought the SBCV’s staff and resources closer to the churches. It also dramatically improved communication and decreased the possibility of an ever-expanding bureaucracy. Regarding decentralization, Dr. Kelly Burris commented,

I remember [us] taking the map, and . . . Geoff [Hammond], on the board, . . . started dividing . . . up [the state]. And we started looking at the different areas of the state. And then we began to look at where there were a lot a churches and where there were not too many churches. And I remember someone said, ‘Wouldn’t it be wonderful if we had somebody in each one of those areas that would focus on nothing but church planting.’ Then we would have somebody come along that would focus on nothing but helping these churches become healthy churches. And out of that came decentralization. And we started out, I think, with five areas. . . .

Thus, decentralization would henceforth shape the future of the SBCV.

Because of the enormous task, the ITF divided its responsibilities between two focus groups: personnel and budget. In the spring of 2002, the ITF made its first employment recommendation to the Executive Board. On April 29th, during an Executive Board meeting, the group elected to hire Dr. Geoffrey Hammond as the Senior Associate Director. Dr. Hammond would report directly to the Executive Director, Doyle Chauncey. He would serve as the SBCV’s Chief Operating Officer “responsible for directing missions and ministries for the convention. [His responsibilities also include

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199 Kelly Burris, Interviewed by Jeffrey R. Pinder.
overseeing] the State Missions Team of Area Missionaries: Church Planting Strategists (CPS) and Church Enrichment Consultants (CEC).”\textsuperscript{200} 

As the Senior Associate Director, Dr. Geoff Hammond used his gifts and abilities to analyze how the SBCV could become a church planting state convention. His conclusion revealed his unwavering passion for church planting, as well as his leadership skills that were necessary to accomplish the task. In a three-page typed document, Dr. Hammond related his thoughts this way, "The goal of our new State Convention is to not only put an emphasis on church planting, but to be a Convention whose main goal is to mobilize churches to plant churches so that we can see a church planting movement in Virginia.”\textsuperscript{201} In the paper, he outlined how every SBCV ministry, publication, and personnel could be used to ignite a church planting philosophy among Baptist churches in Virginia. Dr. Hammond would soon be known by his mantra, "Churches planting churches planting churches planting churches."

By the summer of 2002, the Executive Board continued to hire personnel to fill key positions within the organization. Don Matthews (Midwestern area) and Phil Mitchell (Central area) were employed as CEC. Both Delton Beall (Southeastern and Central areas) and Stewart Pickle (Northern area) were hired as CPS while Phillip Martin took on a dual responsibility of CEC/CPS in the Southwestern area. Also, Andy Brockleman was employed as the Associate Director of Support Ministries (ADSM). He was responsible for supervising support staff and all support ministries at the central

\textsuperscript{200} Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, Book of Reports, 76.

\textsuperscript{201} Geoffrey A. Hammond, “What would a Church Planting State Convention look like?” (paper presented to the Executive Committee).
office in Glen Allen. Mr. Brockleman also assisted area missionaries with their needs. Every year, the day before the Annual Meeting, the SBCV had held a Bible Conference. However, this year would be different. With decentralization in full-swing, the convention adopted a new format to its meeting. The business sessions and the Bible Conference were blended into one spectacular event producing fantastic results. "The new arrangement made the sessions more interesting and enjoyable and emphasized the connection between reports and business on the one hand, and our purpose to serve God on the other." Over time, messengers often commented that they looked forward to the Annual Meeting because it became a time of spiritual refreshment rather than a tedious business meeting.

Decentralization was allowing the SBCV to be very innovative. For instance, during the 2002 Annual Meeting at First Baptist Church, Roanoke on November 11-12, the Missions Team Report was indelibly linked to the strategic objectives and creatively presented by Dr. Hammond. The report was interspersed throughout the two-day convention proceedings. In the first presentation, he "emphasized that there [were] 7.1 million people in Virginia and that only 3 million claimed any affiliation with any religious body. Dr. Hammond stated: 'The light that shines the furthest, shines the brightest at home.'"

There was an historic attendance at the meeting with 763 registered messengers and over 300 guests. The atmosphere was electrifying. Messengers voted to add twenty-

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202 Ibid.


204 Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, Book of Reports, 23.
one new churches to SBCV's membership increasing the total number of affiliated churches to 372. Cooperative Program gifts exceeded the 2002 budget of $5 million dollars by 8.5% or $425,015.20. Total contributions including designated funds amounted to $8,282,744.60 or approximately 1% over budgeted projections. God's blessings were being realized in tangible ways. His blessings were also evident in the gifted staff and vibrant ministries.

Messengers listened intently to the ITF Report. The report, given by chairman Dr. Kelly Burris, revealed a work in progress. In light of a sluggish economy, the proposed 2003 Missions and Ministry Plan of $9.2 million marked a huge step of faith. The projected budget numbers had passed through many hands before final approval. Dr. Burris assured messengers that SBCV staff positions would be filled as funds became available. He went on to address the Articles of Incorporation and Constitutional amendments. Actions on the Articles of Incorporation only required a twenty-five day notice while changes to the Constitution required a one year waiting period. Thus, they could only be considered for approval at the 2003 Annual Meeting.

The following proposed amended Articles of Incorporation were overwhelmingly approved by raised ballots:

**Articles of Incorporation:**
- Limit size of Executive Board to no more than 30 directors and officers/chairs to keep meeting costs from escalating.
- Determine area Board representation on an equitable basis set forth in the bylaws.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 25, 78.
However, messengers were only notified of the anticipated changes to the Constitution, and final consideration and approval would be sought at the 2003 Annual Meeting.

**Constitution:**
- Replace old purpose statement with new statement.
- Delete references to the individual members provision that expired October 1, 2000.
- Remove Article VIII from Constitution (and restate in the Bylaws for greater flexibility).  

During the meeting, messengers also authorized the ETF and the ITF to finish their assigned tasks. Additionally, they approved a motion allowing the ITF to serve as the Constitution and Bylaws Committee for the coming year.

Once again the convention was highlighted by the presentation of twelve Eagle Awards. The visual presentation continued to underscore the SBCV's commitment to church planting. Not only did the SBCV want to be known as a church planting convention, they deeply desired to start a church planting movement that would resonate throughout Virginia and around the globe. Also at this meeting during miscellaneous business, Howard Baldwin made a motion that the SBCV should consider raising the amount given to the SBC by 1% for each of the next five years. Dr. Chauncey addressed his concerns with the motion in light of the restructuring process. In the end, the motion was referred to the Executive Board for consideration.

The 2002 SBCV Annual Meeting came to a close with the presentation of the new officers. Dr. Tim Piland, pastor of Nansemond River Baptist Church, Suffolk, was elected president. Chip Roberson, pastor of Bethel Baptist Church, Chesapeake, was

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206 Ibid.
elected first vice president. Carl Weiser, pastor of Hyland Heights Baptist Church, Lynchburg, was elected second vice president while Dan Cooke, associate pastor of Spotswood Baptist Church, Fredericksburg, was elected as secretary. At various points during the meeting, messengers were challenged to light up Virginia with the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ.\(^\text{207}\)

While the ITF moved forward with the decentralization process, a political storm was brewing at one of Virginia's largest churches, First Baptist Church, Roanoke. At a business meeting in early January 2003, more than 85% of church members voted to leave the BGAV and uniquely align themselves with the SBCV.

With the decision, one of the congregation's most senior members - for who the Baptist General Association's annual statewide offering is named - has decided to leave the church. Alma Hunt, 93, was on the First Baptist "cradle roll" as a girl in Roanoke. She grew up to become executive director of the Woman's Missionary Union, . . . from 1948 to 1974. . . . Hunt told Associated Baptist Press, "I didn't leave my church; it left me. . . . It is no longer the church that nurtured me, and I had to find a place where I could be a full-fledged member and support causes dear to my heart."\(^\text{208}\)

However, Gene Cress, chairman of the board of deacons at First Baptist, said, "We felt it was time to support the organization we felt more a part of."\(^\text{209}\) Although First Baptist had finally taken action to sever ties with the BGAV, they had been affiliated with the SBCV from its inception.

During the early months of 2003, the ITF began drafting a Business and Ministry Plan for the SBCV. The plan carefully outlined policies and procedures for better

\(^{207}\) Ibid., 30, 36.


\(^{209}\) Ibid.
ministry and financial accountability. The final plan contained the following information:

**SBC of Virginia BUSINESS AND MINISTRY PLAN**

**Organization and Purpose:** The Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia (SBCV or “the Convention”) is an autonomous state convention cooperating with the Southern Baptist Convention. The SBCV has two wholly owned subsidiaries: (1) SBC of Virginia Financial Services, Inc. (SBCVFS), and (2) SBC of Virginia Foundation, Inc. (SBCVFN). The SBCV-FS is funded by the SBCV and supports the overall purpose of the SBCV primarily by purchasing property and extending loans from available funds to qualifying new church plants. The SBCV-FN supports the overall purpose of the SBCV by encouraging church members and other individuals to include the local church, SBCV, and SBC ministries in their personal financial estate plan. The SBCV and its subsidiaries are non-stock Virginia corporations recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as not for profit 501(C)(3) religious organizations.

**Ministry Areas:** The number of ministry areas is proportionate to the number of churches in the SBCV. The state of Virginia is presently divided into six strategic ministry areas: (1) Central-East, (2) Central-West, (3) Northern, (4) Midwestern, (5) Southeastern, and (6) Southwestern. Churches in areas surrounding Virginia, including the District of Columbia, may request affiliation with the SBCV. If approved, they will be included in the closest Virginia ministry area.

**Area Missionaries:** Ministry areas receive convention support and assistance through the leadership of state missionaries located strategically throughout the state. Area missionaries are responsible for establishing goals and action plans to accomplish the four strategic objectives of the Convention. Church Enrichment Missionary (CEM) is responsible for the following objectives: (1) Strengthening existing churches, (2) Supporting pastors, staff, and their families, and (3) Educating and mobilizing missions volunteers. Church Planting Strategists (CPS) are responsible for the following objective: (4) Starting new churches. The State Missions Support Center operates from a central location to assist and support the state area missionaries.

**Executive Board:** In accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws, the Executive Board includes ministry area representatives, officers of the convention, and the Executive Director-Treasurer. The Board has three standing committees that act on behalf of the Convention between annual meetings. Each standing committee has two sub-committees. Sub-committees are responsible primarily for the following:

1. Business Committee:

2. Missions and Ministries Committee:  
a. Church Enrichment Sub-committee – Church Enrichment Strategies  
b. Church Planting Sub-committee – Church Planting Strategies

3. Relations Committee:  
a. Church Relations Sub-committee – Church Affiliations  
b. Convention Relations Sub-committee – Other Affiliations and Endorsements

**Executive Committee:** In accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws, the Executive Committee acts on behalf of the Executive Board between Board meetings. The Executive Committee is composed of the following officers: Convention Officers (4), Chairman of the Executive Board (1), Chairman of the Standing Committees (3), and the Executive Director-Treasurer.

**Ministry Area Representation:** The Executive Board will consist of the Convention Officers and representatives from every ministry area. Area representation will be based on total resident church membership within the ministry area, and every area is eligible for a minimum of two board members. Resident membership in excess of 5,000 in a church will not be included in the total for representation. Every ministry area is eligible for an additional board member for every 5,000 resident members above 5,000.

**Cooperative Program of the SBCV:** Financial resources for missions and ministries in Virginia, North America, and around the world come from the generous and faithful financial gifts to the Cooperative Program. In keeping with the original intent of the framers of the Cooperative Program in 1925, SBCV distributes 50% of all undesignated gifts received from its affiliated churches to the Southern Baptist Convention. Each church is an autonomous body and has the right, as do individuals, to make designated gifts as desired. The convention shall manage all designated gifts to be held separate for the purpose for which they were given. All such designated gifts shall be recorded in the convention books and forwarded to the designated ministries. The convention shall have the right to return any gift received from any source not in keeping with the Constitution and Bylaws. The Executive Board shall approve a list of entities and individuals to which the Convention will forward designated gifts. Cooperative Program and designated gifts will be disbursed immediately after closing of the books each month, no later than the 15th day of the following month.

**Solicitation of Funds:** Recipients of Cooperative Program funds may not directly solicit SBCV churches in any fund raising programs without receiving prior approval from the Executive Board.
Amendments: This Business and Ministry Plan may be amended by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Executive Board.\textsuperscript{210}

The Executive Board adopted the ITF's proposed Business and Ministry Plan at its meeting on October 14, 2003.

Meanwhile, the Executive Board continued to hire qualified staff to fill positions within its six designated ministry areas. During the summer of 2003, Steve Bradshaw joined the team as the Church Enrichment Consultant for the Central-West Area while Steve Reid was hired as a CPS for Northern Virginia and the Greater Washington D.C. area. Bradshaw's successful fourteen years of rural experience as pastor of Tucker Swamp Baptist Church in Zuni, Virginia was well suited for the rustic mountain setting in the central west area. Bradshaw's heart for the lost, passion for the ministry, and tender spirit made him an ideal candidate for the CEC position. In like manner, NAMB partnered with the SBCV for the sole purpose of planting new churches in the Greater D.C. area. Consequently, church planting was on the rise within the SBCV.

By the time of the 2003 SBCV Annual Meeting, both the ETF and ITF had completed their assigned task. The meeting that year was held at London Bridge Baptist Church in Virginia Beach, Virginia on November 10-11. A capacity crowd filled the auditorium for the two-day gathering. Records indicate "that there were 811 [registered] messengers . . . and 111 guests - making it the largest SBCV convention ever."\textsuperscript{211} Reports demonstrated just how much God had blessed the SBCV. By the end of the

\textsuperscript{210} Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, Book of Reports, Annual Meeting: Risking to Rescue, London Bridge Baptist Church, Virginia Beach, Virginia, November 10-11, 2003, 17.

\textsuperscript{211} Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, Book of Reports, Annual Meeting: Risking to Renew, Spotswood Baptist Church, Fredericksburg, Virginia, November 8-9, 2004, 6.
convention, the number of SBCV affiliated churches had grown to 408 - 321 uniquely aligned; 45 dually aligned; and 42 church plants.\(^{212}\)

In the Executive Director-Treasurer's Report, Dr. Doyle Chauncey revealed several exciting facts regarding the direction in which the SBCV was headed. The Executive Board reaffirmed its commitment to maintain the 50/50 plan with the SBC. Dr. Chauncey also noted that approximately 65% of all SBCV contributions were passed on to the SBC. He further pointed out that the combined giving of special offerings and other designated gifts was up 17.60% over 2002. The comparative analysis revealed that between January and September of 2003 the SBCV had sent $7,442,686 to the SBC for global missions and ministries. Additionally, the report explained how twenty-seven students were receiving $36,700 in scholarships while three hundred and fifty pastors and staff members were being helped through $75,000 in annual supplemental retirement benefits.\(^{213}\)

Dr. Chauncey explained that "The Business and Ministry Plan provides greater flexibility because it includes items requiring frequent changes that can be amended by the Executive Board as required. It places in writing a system that not only authorizes but also provides greater accountability by establishing general policies and guidelines."\(^{214}\) With the Business and Ministry Plan in place, he gave the following rationale behind how representation on the Executive Board was determined:


\(^{213}\) Ibid., 7-8.

\(^{214}\) Ibid., 8.
With the limited size of the Executive Board, the new configuration provided a fair representation from all six ministry areas.

At the conclusion of his report, Dr. Chauncey challenged messengers with these words, "we must carefully avoid the peril of resting on past accomplishments, ignoring the trends and challenges before us. Courageously facing present and future challenges involves accepting inherent risks . . . From the very beginning of SBCV, we have been 'risk-takers', and we must never lose that same spirit." Later, during the Tuesday morning business session, secretary Dan Cook was called to present the four motions which he had introduced on Monday. Messengers enthusiastically adopted all four motions. The new 2004 Cooperative Program Budget contained $1,000,000 more than

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ministry Area</th>
<th>Churches/Plants Eligible Resident Members</th>
<th>Board Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Central-East</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>22,808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central-West</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>19,565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwestern</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>21,694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>12,963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeastern</td>
<td>92</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southwestern</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>8,022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>408</strong></td>
<td><strong>124,762</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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215 Ibid.

216 Ibid., 10.
Also, the new Constitution and Bylaws would take effect immediately following the Annual Meeting.\textsuperscript{217}

The SBCV had ambitious goals. The Senior Associate Director, Dr. Geoff Hammond, challenged convention churches to baptize 6,000 people by 2005. He also stated that, "The SBCV . . . has a goal of having 500 churches affiliated with the SBCV by 2005."\textsuperscript{218} Dr. Hammond reported how the SBCV was involved with mission work around the world. He also announced that the SBCV was partnering with the IMB in a mission venture to Thailand known as the Southern Cross Project. Messengers were shown a video detailing how disaster relief teams ministered throughout Virginia in the aftermath of Hurricane Isabel. Furthermore, Dr. Hammond described how the SBCV would be instrumental in church planting in New York City through a program called, "New Hope New York." Messengers were energized by the possibilities.\textsuperscript{219}

Later in the meeting, messengers re-elected by acclamation Dr. Tim Piland, pastor at Nansemond River Baptist Church, Suffolk, for a second term as president and Rev. Dan Cook, associate pastor at Spotswood Baptist Church, Fredericksburg, as secretary. They also elected by acclamation Dr. Tim Hight, pastor at Main Street Baptist Church, Christiansburg, as first vice president and Rev. Ronnie Brown, pastor at Swift Creek Baptist Church, as second vice president. The meeting came to a close in a dramatic

\textsuperscript{217} Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, Book of Reports, \textit{Annual Meeting, Risking to Renew}, 6.

\textsuperscript{218} Ibid., 8.

\textsuperscript{219} Ibid.
fashion as Dr. Junior Hill and Dr. Paige Patterson delivered two powerful sermons challenging messengers to missions and evangelism.\textsuperscript{220}

With the new Constitution and Bylaws in place, churches seeking affiliation in 2004 needed to be mindful of the application procedure and requirements. Article V, Affiliation, B, 1 states, "Any Baptist church desiring affiliation with this body shall complete an affiliation application indicating agreement with the doctrinal position of the SBCV and make an initial contribution to the SBCV. Such application must be received at the state office at least two months prior to the annual meeting."\textsuperscript{221} Thus each year, churches desiring to align themselves with the SBCV would only have until early September to do so. Regardless of the deadline, churches were continuing to align themselves with the SBCV.

The year was filled with many exciting events. At the beginning of 2004, SBCV state missionary wives desired to provide a tangible way to encourage, care for, equip, and provide resources to the wives of pastors and staff. These women were able to conceptualize a ministry and bring it to fruition in a ministry called S.W.A.T. The new ministry acronym means Staff Wives Affecting Tomorrow. The response was both immediate and timely. The ministry officially came to life when the SBCV hosted two regional retreats, one in Virginia Beach and the other in Roanoke. Over 125 women found a refuge in the meetings as new friendships were born and prayer partners were developed. Out of these retreats fellowship clusters were created.\textsuperscript{222}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{220} Ibid., 10.
\textsuperscript{221} Ibid., 40.
\textsuperscript{222} Ibid., 26.
\end{flushright}
In the spring of that year, the SBCV expressed its commitment to personal evangelism by holding two Evangelism Conferences in two strategic locations, Hampton and Roanoke. Over 1,000 people representing 156 churches participated in the event. The site of the first conference was First Baptist Church, Roanoke. Many from the mid-to-western portions of the state gathered to learn how to be more effective in reaching the lost. Meanwhile, the second conference was held at Liberty Baptist Church, Hampton. Participants attending the conference came from the central to east portions of the state. They too were delighted to be educated on newer methods of evangelism. It was a life-changing experience for many.\footnote{Ibid., 25.}

Both the spring and summer months witnessed a continued evangelistic thrust. With the approaching summer, the SBCV greatly desired to assist churches with their Vacation Bible School (VBS) efforts. Therefore, the convention developed and hosted twelve VBS clinics around the state. Each clinic location was strategically chosen for maximum impact. Over 945 people benefited from the creative workshops as they interacted with the curriculum and materials. The SBCV's on-going friendship with Liberty University provide the convention with a much needed summer student camp. The first statewide Studentz Camp entitled, \textit{Velocity}, was held in July. The results were phenomenal. There were over 800 in attendance with nearly 100 students making personal professions of faith and seventy-five others committing to either full-time ministry or missions endeavors.\footnote{Ibid.}
In August, the first statewide Youth Evangelism Conference took place in Richmond. It was an exciting time as more than 1,000 students and chaperons were challenged and equipped in personal evangelism strategies. The receptivity of students to the nudging of the Holy Spirit was evident. Two hundred and fifty lives were changed that day as the Spirit descended on the event. Meanwhile, the SBCV changed the name of the Church Enrichment Consultants (CEC) to Church Enrichment Missionaries (CEM). With the new title in place, the convention hired two more people. Randy Aldridge was assigned to the southwest ministry area while Don Cockes joined the team to serve in the southeast area.225

On September 10-11, 2004, the SBCV hosted its first pastors, staff, and wives retreat. The event was held at Wintergreen's Mountain Inn and the featured speakers included Dr. Paige and Dorothy Patterson. The focus of the retreat was "Making Good Marriages Better." They addressed the issue with personal insights surrounded by a biblical framework. The event was well attended as approximately 200 pastors, staff, and their wives participated. This event demonstrated that the SBCV took seriously its objective to support pastors, staff, and their families.226

The decentralized model began to reap great dividends for the SBCV. Because the CEM and CPS were regionally dispersed through the state, ministry effectiveness intensified. CPSs were equipped to target specific locations for starting new churches. The convention's personnel and resources were being utilized to their full potential. In 2004, the total number of state missionaries (husband and wife) serving in the field

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225 Ibid.
226 Ibid., 26.
reached 163: Church Enrichment Missionaries - 10; Church Planting Missionaries - 6; Catalytic Church Planters - 11; Church Planters - 124; Church Planter Interns - 4; and Missionary Associates - 3. It was evident that the SBCV took seriously the Lord's mandate to go and make disciples.

On Monday and Tuesday, November 8-9, 2004, the eighth SBCV Annual Meeting was held at Spotswood Baptist Church in Fredericksburg, Virginia. The theme, "Risking to Renew," was adopted for the upcoming year. Messengers commented that the atmosphere of the convention was more like a revival than a business meeting. That year, over 1,000 people attended the event, including 771 registered messengers. Additionally, the financial picture was vibrant and exhilarating. The Cooperative Program giving was 15% ahead of the previous year with over 68% being forwarded to the SBC. Messengers approved eighteen churches into membership in the SBCV raising the total to 429 affiliated churches. Within that number were 39 church plants. Risking to renew would involve change.227

The SBCV purposefully designed the meeting to continue to emphasize the importance of local church involvement within the organization and church planting. The "State Missions Team Report" was scattered throughout the meeting drawing attention to this fact. Senior Associate Director, Dr. Geoff Hammond, highlighted how God's work through the convention was actually being accomplished by local churches. God's kingdom was being expanded through the combined synergy of the SBCV's mission team along with affiliated churches. Local churches were being more successful

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227 Ibid., 11-15, and Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, Book of Reports, Annual Meeting: Risking to Rescue, 11.
at their task of fulfilling the Great Commission. Both missions and ministries in Virginia were experiencing greater effectiveness.

The vision of church planting was further highlighted when Dr. Hammond presented ten sponsoring churches with Eagle Awards. He "reminded messengers of the importance of risking to renew because we are only one generation from extinction." Messengers unanimously endorsed three resolutions: (1) Supporting the Federal Marriage Amendment; (2) Supporting The War on Terrorism; and (3) Opposing Secularization of our Culture. A resolution on Christian education was not considered by the Resolutions Committee. T. C. Pinckney brought the resolution to the attention of the body. After voting to allow the resolution to be considered, Pinckney read the resolution and asked for it to be accepted. The resolution did not receive the necessary 2/3 vote; therefore, it was defeated.

The Disaster Relief ministry continued to expand as more and more volunteer personnel were trained. By November, "the SBCV Disaster Relief ministry [had] a shower unit and four chainsaw and clean up units. . . . [The] SBCV [was] in the process of building a mass-feeding unit that [would] have the capacity to prepare 20,000 meals per day." In addition, the SBCV developed a Transitional Preaching Team to assist churches which were without a pastor. The team helped churches bridge the gap while seeking a new pastor. It was also, on many occasions, able to foster healing among members.

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228 Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, Book of Report, Annual Meeting: Renewing Your Passion, Grove Avenue Baptist Church, Richmond, Virginia, November 14-15, 2005, 11.

229 Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, Book of Reports, Annual Meeting: Risking to Renew, 26.
Messengers elected new officers for coming year, 2005. All of the following four men were elected by acclamation.

President, Rev. Carl Weiser, senior pastor of Hyland Heights Baptist Church, Lynchburg
First Vice President, Dr. Jeff Ginn, senior pastor of Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, Colonial Heights
Second Vice President, Dr. Thurman Hayes, senior pastor of Bethel Baptist Church, Yorktown
Secretary, Rev. Jeff Meyers, associate pastor of River Oak Church, Chesapeake

Messengers also enthusiastically adopted the 2005 Ministry Plan of $7,750,000. The plan reflected over an 11% increase compared to the previous year. Guest speaker, Voddie Bauchman closed the Annual Meeting with a stirring message on corporate worship.

In the twenty-first century, the SBCV continued to incorporate the expansion of both technology and information. The SBCV began searching for someone who possessed the skills to visually capture the story of the convention and its affiliated churches. In December 2004, Brandon Pickett was hired to be the Statewide Media Missionary. His prior experience as the Executive Producer and News Anchor for the ABC television station servicing the cities of Lynchburg and Danville provided the convention with the ability to successfully navigate the perils of media production. Pickett’s involvement with the Proclaimer, NetNews, and the website greatly enhanced the SBCV’s media presence. The rich blessings of what God was doing through the SBCV churches came alive through the use of video imaging.230

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230 Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, Book of Reports, Annual Meeting: Renewing Your Passion, 33.
During 2005, the SBCV took its challenge "Risking to Renew" seriously. Many people were hungry for a fresh outpouring of the Spirit of God. In January and February the SBCV experienced several exciting events. First, approximately 175 staff wives received much needed encouragement from two S.W.A.T. retreats held in Virginia Beach and Roanoke. Second, LifeWay spent one week training the state missionaries on how to conduct FAITH Clinics. This allowed SBCV greater flexibility and the means for hosting FAITH training clinics at different locations around the state. Finally, NAMB chose the SBCV as the convention to pilot its new church planting material. NAMB's Church Planting Mentoring Team gained vital information as it evaluated and received input from the SBCV’s State Mission Team.231

An additional ministry feature of the SBCV was created when Liberty University chose to align itself with the SBCV. Through this partnership, the SBCV continues to develop a vital connection with students at Liberty known as Liberty Link.

Liberty Link is . . . an effort to mobilize students to do ministry in SBCV churches around the state. This partnership helps mentor and disciple students who have a heart for God and ministry, but also provides an incredible resource for the church. The SBCV has developed a team of students that are available for churches to request during fall and spring semesters.232

The ministry is supported by the SBCV Cooperative Program, and it equips Liberty students for service within SBCV churches. Opportunities range from Disciple NOW weekend teams to Block Party teams. In 2005, sixty students were involved in special events and discipleship in over fifteen SBCV churches.

231 Ibid., 33-34.
The SBCV continued its efforts to facilitate a church planting movement in Virginia. At this point, the number of church plants had increased to sixty-seven. Records reveal that those churches had baptized 332 people and contributed over $426,000 to the Cooperative Program. In light of those statistics, the SBCV hired Larry Black as the CPS for the Central East and Central West areas. His knowledge and skill as a CPS in other state conventions along with his experience with NAMB’s Church Planting Mentoring Team provided the SBCV with an additional resource person for implementing its church planting vision. In 2005, the impact of decentralization on the convention manifested itself in the appointment of fifty-two state missionaries. The total number of state missionaries in the harvest field had reached 208.233

The disaster relief ministry continued to expand far beyond anyone’s expectations. Many devastating events within the borders of the United States had stirred the hearts of conservatives in Virginia. Over 1,250 people had been trained as disaster relief volunteers. Currently, the SBCV owned a thirty-two-foot shower unit, a food unit capable of handling 12,000 meals per day, and ten chain saws contained in a recovery unit. In its short history, the SBCV disaster relief ministry had “responded to 12 events, from floods to hurricanes, from Ohio to Florida. . . . [They] also participated in six World Changer Events, six church mission weeks, and one Hiker’s Week in Damascus.”234 Certainly, God was at work through the SBCV.

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233 Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, Book of Reports, Annual Meeting: Renewing Your Passion, 16-35.

234 Ibid.
The single most evangelistic event in the life of many churches within the SBC is
VBS. With this fact in mind, the SBCV sent a team, comprised mainly of laypeople, to
Nashville, Tennessee, for training. The national training took place during the month of
January. It enabled the SBCV to host eleven spring VBS clinics around the state. The
training clinics equipped 1454 people for local church VBS ministries. In May, the
Executive Board authorized the SBCV Financial Services, Inc. to begin providing low-
cost payroll, legal, insurance, and accounting services for SBCV churches. It was already
providing such services for eight church plants.\(^{235}\)

The SBCV also maintained a strong partnership with the IMB and a commitment
to global evangelization. During 2005, twenty-four teams traveled to Thailand to
participate in a Bible-distribution project to Chinese people known as the Southern Cross.
SBCV churches gave over $61,000 to buy Bibles specifically for this project.
Furthermore, the convention joined with the IMB in an effort to evangelize and plant
churches among the Barotse people group in Western Zambia. The SBCV continued to
assist churches in their endeavors to fulfill the Great Commission. It also launched a new
website over the Labor Day weekend. The site greatly improved SBCV’s ability to pass
on vital information to local churches.\(^{236}\)

The 2005 SBCV Annual Meeting took place November 14-15 at Grove Avenue
Baptist Church in Richmond. The Executive Director-Treasurer’s Report delighted
messengers. After the approval was given for churches requesting affiliation, the total
number of churches aligned with the SBCV had risen to 470 (424 uniquely; 46 dually).

\(^{235}\) Ibid.
\(^{236}\) Ibid.
Of the uniquely aligned churches, sixty-seven were church plants. Dr. Chauncey explained to messengers that based upon the adopted Bylaws in November 2003 and the 2004 Annual Church Profile, the Executive Board had reached its full capacity of 30 members. He further told messengers that in 2006 the ministry areas would be expanded from six to seven, and that both personnel and resources would be deployed to this new strategic area.\textsuperscript{237}

The financial growth of the SBCV was remarkable. The proposed 2006 Cooperative Program Ministry Plan in the amount of $8,200,000 was unanimously adopted without discussion. The plan was a 5.8\% increase over the previous year. Dr. Chauncey noted that most of the SBCV churches had adopted the 50/50 giving plan. He further commented that

\begin{quote}
We have received $5,986,581 during the first three quarters of the current year: 10.3\% ahead of last year at this same time, and 1.0\% ahead of the current budget. . . . Among the 41 state conventions, SBCV has the second highest percentage in the Southern Baptist Convention. . . . Currently, we are providing $40,000 annually in seminary scholarships, and approximately $90,000 annually for supplemental retirement benefits for pastors and staff of SBCV churches.\textsuperscript{238}
\end{quote}

The SBCV was also receiving designated money for Virginia missions from NAMB and LifeWay in the amount of $650,000. Messengers applauded and thanked God for His rich financial blessings.

There was a strong sense of God's presence at the meeting. The convention recorded its largest attendance (1,192 registered messengers and 190 guests). Messengers unanimously adopted the five following resolutions on: Homosexuality in

\textsuperscript{237} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{238} Ibid., 16-17.
Education; Judicial Nominations; Disaster Relief; Intelligent Design; and Appreciation for the President and the Troops. Later in the meeting, Carl Weiser was re-elected by acclamation to a second term as president. The other officers elected were: first vice president, Dr. Mark Becton, pastor of Grove Avenue Baptist Church, Richmond; second vice president, Rev. Ken Nienke, pastor of Fellowship Community Church, Salem; and secretary, Rev. Steve Markle, pastor of Life Community Church, Lorton.239

On Tuesday evening, the meeting came to a close in a celebratory fashion. Dr. Hammond presented twenty-six churches with Eagle Awards for sponsoring a church plant. It was also pointed out that as of 2005 the SBCV had bestowed 79 Eagle Awards to sponsoring churches who were directly involved in planting a new church. Dr. Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, gave the final address. In his message, he reminded messengers to continue their strong stand on the Word God. T. C. Pinckney's remarks best describe the atmosphere of the convention when he writes, "In fact, no one even spoke from the floor to any motion or nomination. In large part this unanimity sprang from the careful advance planning and biblical choices, and from the clear, consistent, and considerate attitudes and explanations from those at the podium. . . ."240

239 Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, Book of Reports, Annual Meeting: More Beyond, First Baptist Church, Roanoke, Virginia, November 13-14, 2006, 1-14.

Conservative Baptists in Virginia continued to be amazed at the incredible blessings that God was pouring out on the churches of the SBCV. As a matter of fact, other conventions were beginning to take note of SBCV's success. The growth of the convention in both Cooperative Program giving as well as in the number of SBCV churches can only be attributed to one source - God. As the SBCV approached its ten-year anniversary, the original vision given by God to a few pastors and laypeople was still alive and thriving. With a devout desire to strengthen local churches for cooperative missions and the tenacity to remain faithful to the Word of God, the SBCV is truly a convention characterized by strong biblical convictions.

Under the proven leadership of Dr. Doyle Chauncey, both the Executive Board and Executive Committee continued to chart a course for the convention's future. The decentralized structure of the organization precipitated a greater kingdom expansion through local church ministries. The once-looming fear of an organizational bureaucracy never materialized. Cooperating churches realized that by channeling their resources through the SBCV, the task of fulfilling the Great Commission was being accomplished. Kingdom expansion was evident throughout Virginia and subsequently around the world.

The SBCV firmly believes that its headquarters is embodied within the local church. It is the local church that empowers and enables the SBCV to accomplish all of its ministry endeavors. The SBCV exists because local churches are committed to participating in cooperative missions together. The reality is that the Cooperative
Program "is still the most efficient and effective way of doing missions together."\textsuperscript{241} With its limited bureaucracy, the SBCV is better equipped to help local churches mobilize their members for Kingdom ministry. Much of the ministry is accomplished through volunteers. The SBCV channels a significant amount of its financial resources to assist volunteers in training and hands-on missions.

The SBCV continued to be guided by its five core values. Its focus and function was to strengthen local churches and to assist them in their mission of fulfilling the Great Commission. For instance, by the summer of 2006 nearly 2,000 volunteers had been trained in disaster relief ministry. The primary focus of disaster relief ministry is personal evangelism. All volunteers are adequately prepared to respond to both physical and spiritual needs. The SBCV's disaster relief arsenal had dramatically increased to twenty-two units. These units are constantly on standby and ready to be deployed at a moment's notice. Its inventory includes two feeding units, two shower units, one communications and operations unit, one bunkhouse unit, and a host of other units filled with various equipment specifically designed for cleaning-up after a disaster.

There has been an overwhelming response by the churches of the SBCV to natural disasters within the USA and around the world. Financial records indicate that in addition to Cooperative Program giving and special offerings between 2004 and 2006 an amazing $1,254,002 was given as designated money to disaster relief through the SBCV. Clearly, compassion for those affected by natural disasters is displayed through the men, women, boys, and girls of the SBCV. In his 2006 State Missions Team Annual Report,

\textsuperscript{241} SBC of Virginia, \textit{10 Years in the Making} (2006).
Dr. Hammond revealed just how much the SBCV churches were committed to helping people through catastrophic events when he wrote:

Nearly, 1,500 trained volunteers were able to provide over 15,000 showers and wash over 1,300 loads of laundry with shower unit. Our mud-out and recovery units completed 397 clean-up jobs, and our feeding unit cooked and served over 477,363 hot meals at 14 different locations. The most encouraging announcement however was through the efforts of the Disaster Relief Volunteers. There were recorded 56 professions of faith.\textsuperscript{242}

The Disaster Relief ministry was allowing the SBCV to respond quickly to tragic events.

The summer of 2006 also witnessed the development and expansion of SBCV church enrichment and church planting missionaries. While preparing for the July 1 move from six to seven ministry areas, the SBCV began re-aligning and/or hiring new missionaries to serve in the seven ministry areas. Reverend Jack Noble, along with his wife, Rhoda, began serving as Church Enrichment Missionaries in the Midwest area. Jack's background in education and his leadership as the volunteer state director for disaster relief provided an added benefit to the organization. Reverend Don Matthews and his wife, Mary Ann, were re-assigned to the Central East area to continue their work as Church Enrichment Missionaries. Their combined abilities and gifts were well-suited for missionary work within the convention.

In addition to these, Reverend Darrell Webb and his wife, Angela, were called to serve as Church Enrichment Missionaries in the Northern Ministry Area of Virginia. With his administrative gifts and pastoral experience, churches in the northern region of Virginia received a hands-on touch from the SBCV. Additionally, Bill Wennersten transitioned from an Interim Church Enrichment Missionary for the Northern Virginia

\textsuperscript{242} Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, Book of Reports, \textit{Annual Meeting: More Beyond}, First Baptist Church, Roanoke, Virginia, November 13-14, 2006, 31.
Ministry Area to an Associate Church Enrichment Missionary. His new assignment focused primarily on the Greater D. C. Area. The SBCV began sharpening its focus by incorporating these onsite missionaries to encourage and equip pastors and laymen to have a great spiritual impact. Penetrating the darkest corners of Virginia was going to take a team effort in their individual regions.

Furthermore, the SBCV began hiring more Church Planting Missionaries. It truly believed that the key to evangelizing Virginia would be best accomplished through starting new churches. The goal of becoming a church planting convention continued to be a major priority. The SBCV persistently stressed the importance of every church being involved in starting a new work. Therefore, Mark Custalow was called to serve as a Church Planting Strategist in the Southeastern Ministry Area. He and his wife, Ann, joined the church planting team alongside of Phil Martin. Mark's church planting work with NAMB provided the SBCV with a valuable resource for its on-going church planting efforts. Similarly, Tony Inmon moved from the Tidewater area of Virginia to Christiansburg. This transition allowed Inmon to serve as the Associate Church Planting Strategist for the Southwestern and Midwestern Ministry Areas.

Plans were underway for SBCV's ten-year celebration. The milestones of biblical inerrancy, an historic 50/50 Cooperative Program distribution plan, the decentralization of ministry areas, and church planting provided SBCV churches with an opportunity to celebrate the past while trusting God for the future. Within ten short years, much had been accomplished through divine intervention. Someone thoughtfully wrote, "We need
to teach those who are coming behind us that it was God who built this convention and that we can trust Him for our future.”

In August, 2006, during a "Missions Celebration" held at LifeWay's Ridgecrest Conference Center in North Carolina, NAMB honored fifteen state Baptist conventions with a National Church Planting Award. Prominently featured among the group of recipients was the SBCV. During a six year period (1999 to 2005), the SBCV recorded an 81% increase in new church starts. Also, the SBCV was given the Evangelism Award for achieving double-digit increases in baptism during 2004 to 2005. God was accomplishing a great work in and through the churches of the SBCV.

The 2006 SBCV Annual Meeting took place at First Baptist Church in Roanoke, Virginia on November 13-14. Over one thousand people gathered to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the SBCV. The atmosphere was filled with praise, gratitude, and optimism. From this moment forward the SBCV Annual Meeting would be referred to as the Annual Homecoming. The two day event entitled More Beyond afforded speakers the opportunity to review the past in hopes of stimulating messengers to remain faithful to the Great Commission. The success of future generations would be shaped by the decisions made by messengers at this convention. Their faithfulness and commitment to the inerrancy of Scripture, the Cooperative Program, decentralization, and church planting would serve as cornerstones for generations to come.

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243 SBC of Virginia, 10 Years in the Making, 2006.

244 BP Staff, “NAMB honors 18 state conventions for church planting and evangelism,” The Baptist Banner, Vol. XIX, No. 8, October 2006.
The Executive Director-Treasurer's Report was a powerful reminder of how God was at work through the churches of the SBCV. At the present time, 479 churches were partnering with the SBCV for cooperative missions. Additionally, thirteen church plants were in various stages of development. Through the first three quarters of 2006, the Cooperative Program receipts were 3% ahead of the previous year. Scholarships for students, along with retirement benefits for pastors and staff members, had significantly increased. Dr. Chauncey concluded his report by stating:

The 10th Anniversary Homecoming can also be considered a "rite of passage". A "rite" is a celebration or ceremony. . . . "Rites of passage" are invitations to receive God's promise of much "more beyond," but require openness for change. Change requires action and is always difficult, and absolutely necessary in order to claim the promise of "a future and a hope." (Jeremiah 29:11). The challenge for the next ten years and beyond is not to just accept change, but to welcome and manage it. Hold to biblical truth and proven traditions, but always welcome change.  

The focal point of Dr. Chauncey's report was the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Messengers enthusiastically and unanimously approved thirteen new churches requesting affiliation with the SBCV. The growth of the SBCV can be clearly documented by regarding the parallels which are evident between the rising number of affiliated churches and the steady increase of Cooperative Program giving. God was continuing to mature the convention both physically and spiritually. For example, consider the proposed 2007 Cooperative Ministry Investment Plan. The projected budget revealed a 6.1 percent increase over the previous year. On Tuesday morning, when Dr. David Johnson, Chairman of the Executive Board, read the recommendation for the adoption of the 2007 Cooperative Ministry Investment Plan of $8,700,000, there was no

245 Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, Book of Reports, Annual Meeting: More Beyond, 19.
discussion, and messengers unanimously approved the recommendation. The meeting was dominated by a sweet-spirit of cooperation and anticipation.

During the celebration, two men were presented with a Nehemiah Award for outstanding leadership and faithful service to the SBCV. The first recipient was General T. C. Pinckney, a layman from Good News Baptist Church, Alexandria, Virginia. Pinckney is the founder and editor of *The Baptist Banner*. He played a significant role in the formation of the SBCV Fellowship and the SBCV. The second person given the award was Dr. Kelly Burris, pastor of Kempsville Baptist Church, Virginia Beach, Virginia. Like Pinckney, Dr. Burris was also very instrumental in the early days of the SBCV Fellowship and helped to set the stage for the birth of the new state convention. His exceptional leadership and love for the SBCV is abundantly obvious.

A special video tribute was paid to the family of the late Reverend Bob Melvin who died on September 6, 2006. In addition to this visual honor, messengers joyously received a resolution appreciating his life and ministry. Part of the resolution reads as follows:

WHEREAS, Reverend Bob Melvin, Pastor of Spotswood Baptist Church, has served faithfully and with tremendous vision and effectiveness in the establishing and ongoing of Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia from its inception until the time God called him home; and

WHEREAS, he also made major contributions to the work of Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia as a member of the Executive Committee since its creation; and

WHEREAS, he has functioned in key positions first of all as President of the Bible conference and then as President of Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia and also as key member of the transition team, overseeing and directing
the change of Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia from a fellowship into a new autonomous state Baptist convention. . . .

Melvin's proven leadership and keen vision would certainly be missed.

Messengers were also presented with another resolution thanking charter churches and individuals for their courage, faith, vision, and commitment "to become the first double state convention in one state in the Southern Baptist Convention. . . ." Furthermore, to the delight of many, Dr. Hammond distributed eleven Eagle Awards to pastors of churches that sponsored a new church plant during the year. The special recognition concluded with a time of prayer for both the church planter and the sponsoring church.

On Tuesday afternoon during the business session, messengers turned their attention to the nomination and election of officers. Dr. Dennis Culbreth (President), senior pastor at River Oak Church, Chesapeake, and Rev. Gene Primm (First Vice President), senior pastor at Bethany Baptist Church, Portsmouth, were elected by acclamation. Rev. Steve Markle was re-elected as Secretary. Two candidates were nominated for Second Vice President, and "In the only ballot vote of the meeting, Kevin Cummings was elected. Messengers were united around their newly elected officials. The synergy created at the meeting would extend well into the future.

The 2006 Annual Homecoming celebration featured three keynote speakers: Dr. Morris Chapman, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Southern Baptist


247 Ibid., 8.

Convention; Dr. Paige Patterson, President of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary; and Dr. Johnny Hunt, Senior Pastor at First Baptist Church, Woodstock, Georgia. All three men praised the SBCV for its courage and conviction. In a letter addressed to the SBCV, Dr. Chapman commented:

A decade has passed since the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia became a full-fledged state convention in September 1996. I appreciate Doyle Chauncey, your executive director-treasurer, for his friendship in the conservative cause, and for your faithful partnership in the Cooperative Program over the past ten years.

As you celebrate your 10th anniversary, I remain greatly encouraged that the SBCV directs 50 percent of its undesignated receipts, with no preferred or exception items, to the Southern Baptist Convention for national and international missions and ministries. . . . I commend you for your positive example, and look forward to our continued partnership in reaching every person for every tribe, tongue, and nation with the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ.249

His sermon from Acts 1:4-8 challenged messengers to remain faithful and continue to dream for the future.

Dr. Patterson was equally encouraging when he wrote:

As I watched the birth of the SBCV, I watched a group of men and women handle a difficult situation with the greatest of Christian charity and kindness and with a focus on Christ and His assigned mission. What could have been a very uncomfortable situation was instead a marvelous victory of conviction and compassion wed together. . . .

Now the future awaits. If the Lord delays His coming, it is my conviction that the SBCV will continue its commitment to place a Bible believing, Southern Baptist church in every city and village in Virginia. I am convinced you will also continue to lend a hand to the work of world missions to the ends of the earth.250

His sermon entitled, "Should Baptist's Eat Sausage?" taken from Romans 6:1-9, encouraged messengers to remain faithful to their biblical convictions and calling.


250 Paige Patterson, Letter to the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, October 24, 2006.
The event drew to a dramatic close on Tuesday evening with music by an anniversary choir and an engaging sermon by Dr. Johnny Hunt. His energetic style captivated the audience and challenged them to advance God’s Kingdom. The churches in partnership with the SBCV were penetrating the culture with the gospel, and the expectation of "More Beyond" would materialize as the future unfolded.

In 2007, the SBCV would witness a number of significant changes within the organization. Many, though positive in nature, would serve to refocus and reshape the convention's future. One such change happened on March 21, 2007. The trustees at NAMB unanimously elected church planting missionary Dr. Geoff Hammond as the new President of the organization. Dr. Hammond would officially assume his new duties beginning in early May. T. C. Pinckney expressed the SBCV’s sentiments in an editorial note by stating, "Talk about mixed feelings! NAMB is getting a great servant, and the SBCV is losing a great leader.\(^{251}\) His servant leadership, vision, experience, and uncompromising commitment to church planting would re-energize NAMB in its efforts to evangelize North America.

The disaster relief team faced one of its most daunting and painful events following the April 16, 2007 massacre at Virginia Tech. Volunteers, who had trained for natural disasters, immediately responded. The team provided hot meals to over 200 police officers and students in the aftermath of the shooting. Area SBCV churches also assisted by transporting grieving parents from local airports to campus. Jack Noble, SBCV Church Enrichment Missionary, captured the scene by saying, "The best thing you

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\(^{251}\) Mike Ebert, "Geoff Hammond to Lead NAMB!" The Baptist Banner, Vol. XX, No. 4, April 2007.
can do is show up prepared and ready to respond and that's what we did . . . We are even
now surveying the campus, talking to students and teachers, looking for opportunities to
serve and share the Good News of Jesus Christ to a hurting community.”

At the May 15, 2007 Executive Board meeting in Richmond, Virginia, Dr. Doyle
Chauncey recommended the formation of an Executive Director-Treasurer Search
Committee. Retirement loomed in the near future. However, the time was ripe for Dr.
Chauncey to re-position himself within the structure of the SBCV. In accordance with
the Constitution and Bylaws, Article III, E, 2 & 3, the Executive Committee immediately
sprang into action securing a seven member Search Committee chaired by Randy Hahn,
senior pastor at Colonial Heights Baptist Church, Colonial Heights, Virginia. The intent
was "to select someone who will work alongside Doyle for a period of time and assume
the position of Executive Director-Treasurer at a date yet to be determined.”

It was also on this date, May 15, 2007, that the founder and chancellor of Liberty
University and Thomas Road Baptist Church, Dr. Jerry Falwell, went home to be with the
Lord. A charismatic leader, he was a staunch biblical conservative and a friend of the
SBCV. Dr. Falwell was also unafraid to challenge controversial political matters. It was
through his direct efforts that the partnership between Liberty University and the SBCV
began. Many SBCV pastors continue to achieve higher educational degrees because of
the scholarships made possible through this joint venture. His decisive leadership and
evangelistic passion would certainly be missed.

252 Brandon Pickett, "Disaster relief team 'wanted to be available,'" *The Baptist Banner*, Vol. XX,

253 T. C. Pinckney, "Pushing Back the Darkness!" *The Baptist Banner*, Vol. XX, No. 9, Nov/Dec
2007.
Word spread quickly concerning Dr. Chauncey’s retirement. At this critical juncture, the thought of losing his tested leadership and ability to see beyond the present was concerning to many within the churches of the SBCV. However, God’s sovereignty would prove sufficient in this time of need. In addition to his announcement, several other key SBCV leaders were called to serve alongside of Dr. Hammond at the NAMB headquarters in Alpharetta, Georgia. These leaders included: Steve Reid, team leader for the Church Planting Strategists; Brandon Pickett, team leader of Media and Communications; and Dennis Culbreth, senior pastor of River Oak Church in Chesapeake, Virginia and also the current president of the SBCV. It seemed as if there was a gaping hole in a number of key leadership positions at the SBCV. Nonetheless, the SBCV was prepared to handle such a void.

The theme for the 2007 Annual Homecoming was, "Pushing Back the Darkness." It certainly did seem like one of the darkest hours in the history of the SBCV. The meeting was held at Liberty Baptist Church in Hampton, Virginia on November 12-13. Despite the energetic atmosphere, messengers gathered with thoughts of recent events lingering in their minds. Nagging questions spilled over into spoken words. What would happen to the SBCV? Who would fill the leadership void? How would the organization handle future challenges? These and other questions would soon be put to rest.

The meeting appropriately began with a luncheon provided by the SBCV's Disaster Relief Team served from one of its own disaster relief trailers. Calling Levi, a singing group from Townsend, Delaware, delighted messengers with a mini-concert. After recognizing military personnel and pledging allegiance to the American flag, the SBCV vowed to support and minister to national guardsmen and their families. The
annual meeting was called to order by Dr. Gene Primm, pastor of Bethany Baptist Church, Portsmouth, Virginia and first vice president of the SBCV. At this point, Dr. Chauncey was recognized to present the Executive Director-Treasurer's Report.

In his report, Chauncey emphasized the work that God was doing through the Cooperative Program. He urged messengers to continue with their cooperative mission endeavors. He stated that 22 churches were seeking affiliation bringing the total number of aligned churches to 511. Dr. Chauncey also told messengers that the SBCV was experiencing a steady climb in the number of affiliated churches as well as Cooperative Program receipts. By the end of September 2007, the SBCV had received and distributed over $61,000,000 in Cooperative Program contributions. He concluded his report by quoting from a book entitled, *One Sacred Effort*.

The Cooperative Program is (1) **coherent rather than chaotic** . . . intentional and purposeful. . . . The Cooperative program is (2) **constant rather than spasmodic** . . . Southern Baptists, as a group partner together and provide support for missions and ministry. The Cooperative Program is (3) **comprehensive rather than isolated**. . . . When a congregation – even the tiniest congregation – gives through the Cooperative program, it is participating in a comprehensive approach that reaches everywhere, everyday, every year. . . . The Cooperative Program is (4) **cooperative rather than competitive**. . . . It reminds us that we can do more together than we can separately. . . . The Cooperative Program is not the only plan for reaching the entire world for Christ, but it could be the most effective, efficient, far-reaching, missionary funding enterprise in the history of Christian denominations.\(^{254}\)

Dr. Chauncey's passion for evangelism is exemplified through his love for the Cooperative Program and church planting.

For the first time in the history of the SBCV, the proposed 2008 Cooperative Program Ministry Investment Plan, if fully funded, would reach $10,000,000 ($9,300,000

in Cooperative Program contributions and $700,000 in SBC Partnership assistance). The projected budget reflected a $600,000 (6.9%) increase over 2007. Over one thousand messengers unanimously approved the new budget for the coming year. They also elected the following people as convention officers: President, Dr. Tim Hight, pastor at Main Street Baptist Church, Christiansburg; First Vice President, Dr. Mike Palmer, pastor at Green Ridge Baptist Church, Roanoke; Second Vice President, Rev. Rick Caldwell, pastor at Concord Baptist Church, Farmville; and as Secretary Dr. Allen McCullough, pastor at Rileyville Baptist Church, Rileyville.

During the meeting, Kevin Cummings shared the following concerning the state of the convention.

- In a year of transition in leadership, we reached the milestone of five hundred eleven churches, twenty-eight of them being planted new in 2007 and eight more in the process.
- While other state conventions’ Cooperative Program giving was in decline, the SBCV continued to set the example nationally with the 50/50 model, while increasing giving by over six percent in 2007.
- Our Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions increased by over $75,000, and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions increased by over $45,000.
- We mobilized more missionaries from SBCV churches than ever before, continuing existing partnerships abroad and establishing a new partnership in South America.
- With the variety of hands-on mission opportunities for the entire year, we saw participation in these projects almost double.\textsuperscript{255}

Many fears were alleviated as messengers saw first-hand God's blessing on the SBCV.

The impact on Virginia and around the globe was amazing.

Messengers were treated to a wonderful video tribute to the late Dr. Jerry Falwell.

The video revealed just a small portion of the many people impacted by his life and

\textsuperscript{255} Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, Book of Reports, \textit{Annual Homecoming: Pushing Back the Darkness through Prayer}, First Baptist Church, Roanoke, Virginia, November 10-11, 2008, 9.
ministry. Following the video, Dr. Ergun Caner, president of Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary challenged messengers from Acts 4 with a message entitled, "It's Simple."

Other featured speakers included: Dr. O. S. Hawkins, president and chief executive officer of GuideStone Financial Resources; Dr. Mac Brunson, pastor at First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Florida; and Dr. Tom Elliff, senior vice president for spiritual nurture and church relations with the IMB. They all encouraged messengers to embrace a "whatever it takes" mindset to reach people for Christ.

Needless to say, the year 2007 was a year that tested the SBCV's leadership and strengthened the messengers' resolve. In hindsight, it is easy to see God's great hand moving through the churches in partnership with the SBCV. Their cooperative mission endeavors are remarkable. The quality of programs, training events, multimedia, and church growth are a testimony to God's faithfulness. As the number of affiliated churches continued to grow, SBCV missionaries were utilizing associates and apprentices to assist them in the field. These men were proving to be a valuable resource to the regional missionaries. Their knowledge and skills were well-suited for assisting local congregations in their endeavors to fulfill the Great Commission.

God's hand of favor continued to rest on the SBCV. In 2008, the Executive Director-Treasurer Search Committee, chaired by Dr. Randy Hahn, continued its journey to find the right man for the job. By the spring of 2008, the committee had narrowed its search to one man, Dr. Jeffery Ginn. The SBCV Executive Board met on May 13, 2008 and unanimously approved Dr. Ginn for the position. After accepting the new task, Dr. Ginn commented, "As I undertake this new assignment from the Lord, one of the first things on my heart and mind is to build upon the effective foundation and insightful
strategies for state missions that this exemplary entity already has in place."256 He assumed the new role as Executive Director-Treasurer beginning June 2, 2008. Meanwhile, Dr. Chauncey would "serve as special assistant to Ginn to aid in the transition, and he [would] remain as president of the SBCV's Church Ministry Services and Foundation until May 31, 2009."257

Dr. Ginn quickly outlined his vision for the future ministry of the SBCV by saying, "My first concern is that our churches continue to multiply, both in baptisms and church planting. Second is that our churches continue to mature in the faith. And third is that all our churches mobilize for local and global impact."258 In his initial statement, the seeds were planted for the 3M objectives (Multiplying Churches, Maturing Churches, and Mobilizing Churches). The original four local church objectives (Strengthen, Support, Start, Send) would soon be replaced by the 3M's. Delighted by the outcome, Dr. Chauncey "commended the SBCV search committee 'whose diligent work and tireless search have rendered to us Jeff Ginn, a pastor and servant-leader who is uniquely qualified and significantly gifted to take the SBCV helm."259

The SBCV's annual state convention is anything but a business meeting. The integrated format combines powerful preaching, inspiring testimonies, and dynamic music, with traditional convention business. The arrangement creates an atmosphere that is truly characteristic of a homecoming. The SBCV 12th Annual Homecoming took place

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257 Ibid.

258 Ibid.

259 Ibid.
on November 10-11, 2008 at First Baptist Church in Roanoke, Virginia. During his first Executive Director-Treasurer's Report, Dr. Ginn addressed his reasoning behind the 3M objectives. He stated that

Historically, we have organized our state missionary force around two primary objectives: church planting and church enrichment. We are blessed with missionaries who absolutely excel in these vital pursuits. We will continue to emphasize these objectives.

At the same time, we are elevating a third objective to parallel these. It is church mobilization. The New Testament makes clear that not only are we to help existing churches on toward maturity and multiply new church starts, we are to mobilize every congregation to fulfill the Great Commission. . . You will notice that all three "Ms" focus on churches. That is why we exist--to facilitate the ministries and mission of SBCV churches.²⁶⁰

Messengers liked the streamlined approach and enthusiastically embraced the new objectives.

That year, 25 more churches joined the SBCV bringing the total affiliated churches to 547. Of that number, 499 were uniquely aligned while 48 were dually aligned. Messengers also adopted the 2009 proposed Ministry Investment Plan of $9,500,000. The plan was only a $200,000 increase over the previous year. For the first time in the history of the SBCV, the Cooperative Program receipts were slightly less (1%) than that of the same 2007 period. Even in light of the economic decline, the SBCV was still continuing to experience tremendous growth in its cooperative mission endeavors. Dr. Chauncey alleviated concerns by stating that "the SBCV is financially sound, despite the economic crisis."²⁶¹

²⁶⁰ Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, Book of Reports, Annual Homecoming: Pushing Back the Darkness through Prayer, 13-14.

²⁶¹ Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, Book of Reports, Annual Homecoming: Pushing Back the Darkness through Evangelism, First Baptist Church, Norfolk, Virginia, November 8-10, 2009, 16.
Regardless of the economic downturn, the SBCV was continuing to uphold the 50/50 Cooperative Program distribution commitment with the SBC. The newly adopted budget, if fully funded, would send $4,750,000 to the SBC for worldwide missions. "The SBCV has the second highest percentage of any state convention in the Southern Baptist Convention." Moreover, the SBCV would receive an additional $1.5 million from NAMB, LifeWay, and Strategic Opportunity Funds for ministry and missions investment within the state. The SBCV was very careful to inform messengers that 50% of any Cooperative Program funds received in excess of the budget would be forwarded to the SBC. The SBCV strongly believed in the mutual power of the Cooperative Program.

The highlight of the 2008 Annual Homecoming was the commissioning service for the new Executive Director-Treasurer, Dr. Jeffery Ginn. The service began with an introduction from Dr. Randy Hahn, chairman of the Search Committee, about the committee's process that led them to Dr. Ginn. Excitement and anticipation began to build as Dr. Chauncey shared about the biblical significance of passing on the mantle of leadership. He then placed a cloth mantle on Dr. Ginn's shoulders and led messengers in a commissioning prayer. Messengers eagerly watched as Dr. Ginn washed Dr. Chauncey's feet as a symbol of honor and servanthood. The service concluded with a fitting video tribute to the life and ministry of Dr. Chauncey.

Dr. Doyle Chauncey was also honored with several unique gifts. First, a resolution appreciating his ministry and service to the SBCV was read:

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262 Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, Book of Reports, Annual Homecoming: Pushing Back the Darkness through Prayer, 14.

263 Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, Book of Reports, Annual Homecoming: Pushing Back the Darkness through Evangelism, 20.
WHEREAS, Dr. Doyle Chauncey has served since the inception of the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia and was among others instrumental in its founding,

WHEREAS, We believe that God has worked mightily through his vision and humble service and, upon his retirement as executive director of the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia,

Be it RESOLVED, that we express our gratitude to God and love to our brother in Christ.\(^{264}\)

Second, T. C. Pinckney presented him with the Banner Award for his many contributions to the conservative cause. Third, Chauncey was surprised with a special gift - a 2003 Harley-Davidson, 1200 Custom Sportster, 100\(^{th}\) Anniversary Edition Special. Dr. Chauncey could hardly contain his emotions. He expressed his appreciation and thanked the churches for their continued support.

Earlier that year, after examining the SBCV’s convention model, Dr. Jim Hamilton, Executive Director of the Dakota Baptist Convention, initiated talks with the SBCV. At the annual meeting, the SBCV introduced this exciting opportunity to partner with Southern Baptists in the Dakotas. Dr. Hamilton was convinced that a partnership with the SBCV would result in lives being changed by the power of the gospel and the establishment of a plethora of new church plants within the two states. Messengers were eager to learn more about the partnership and how they could be involved. Mark Custalow, director of Multiplying Churches for the SBCV, shared his personal excitement about the partnership. He also introduced five Virginia pastors who were already committed to launching this new endeavor. The partnership was officially

\(^{264}\) Ibid., 17.
confirmed when the Executive Director, Jeff Ginn, and President, Tim Hight, publicly
signed the agreement.

The 2008 Annual Homecoming also featured video prayer challenges from
prominent SBC personalities including: Dr. Henry Blackaby, founder and president
emeritus of Blackaby Ministries International and author of *Experiencing God*; Dr. Jerry
Rankin, president of the International Mission Board; Dr. Geoff Hammond, president of
the North American Mission Board; and Dr. Johnny Hunt, pastor of First Baptist Church,
Woodstock, GA, and president of the Southern Baptist Convention. Additionally, some
forty churches received Eagle Awards for church planting, and two individuals, Mr.
Wayne Nienke and Rev. Ken Nienke, were honored with the Nehemiah Award for their
contribution to the convention during the foundational years.

Furthermore, the SBCV began distributing two new awards, the Macedonia
Award for Cooperative Program giving and the Pentecost Award for baptisms. The
Macedonia Award was presented to Dr. Bryan Smith, pastor at First Baptist Church,
Roanoke, for highest Cooperative Program giving in 2008, and to Rev. Donald Joyner,
pastor at Matoaca Baptist Church, Matoaca, for the highest Cooperative Program giving
per capita in 2008. The Pentecost Award for the highest number of baptisms in 2008 was
given to Thomas Road Baptist Church, Lynchburg, and to Edward Avenue Baptist
Church, Waynesboro, for the highest baptisms per capita in 2008.

Messengers re-elected Dr. Tim Hight (President) and Dr. Michael Palmer (First
Vice President) to a second term by acclamation. Dr. Brian Autry (Second Vice
President) and Rev. Michael C. Smith (Secretary) were also both elected by acclamation.
Records indicate that 948 people (729 messengers and 219 guests) were in attendance.
Dr. Junior Hill, full-time Southern Baptist Evangelist, captured the audience's attention by reminiscing about the day the SBCV became a state convention. His words of commendation to Dr. Ginn were both challenging and appropriate. Other speakers included Dr. Dave Earley, chairman of the Department of Pastoral Leadership, Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, Lynchburg, and Dr. John Avant, senior pastor at First Baptist Church, West Monroe, Louisiana. The two-day event came to a fitting close as the new Executive Director-Treasurer, Dr. Ginn, preached on the importance of yielding to Christ.
Chapter Six

Conclusion

From its inception, the SBCV has been a strong conservative movement primarily driven by laypeople. Conservative men and women like T. C. Pinckney, John Sims, Phyllis Randall, and Catherine Kamp were very instrumental and influential during the formative years of the SBCV. Through *The Banner*, Pinckney was able to alert others around the state to the issues facing conservative Baptists. Dr. Chauncey recalls that "he got the ears of the laypeople, men in the churches began to read *The Banner*, and then they started causing problems in the churches for the liberal pastors."²⁶⁵  He went on to say that "Sometimes the pastors were the last ones to come on board. So yeah, there were some key pastors in the beginning. Some of those pastors got started because their laymen came to them with a *Banner*.²⁶⁶  The SBCV continues to chart a strong conservative course largely due to the direct involvement of laypeople.

Evangelist Bob Davis also remembers how his former pastor, Art Ballard, relayed pertinent information to Virginia conservatives through the use of their church's newsletter. Ballard was the first to use this medium to attempt to communicate the current issues affecting Virginia Southern Baptists. Before the first publication of *The Banner*, "Art Ballard put out a paper. It was primarily through his newsletter. And he did have information he sent out. And T.C. picked up on that."²⁶⁷  The newsletters


²⁶⁶ Ibid.

highlighted the liberal social and theological agenda pursued by the leadership within the BGAV. Ballard was one of the first to awaken both pastors and laymen to the serious nature of the issues facing conservative Virginia Baptists. His newsletter became a powerful tool that eventually gave a conservative voice to Baptists living in Virginia.

By the 2009 SBCV Annual Homecoming, the number of churches affiliated with the convention reached 550. In his Multiplying Churches Report, Mark Custalow writes, "Since the inception of the SBC of Virginia, 181 member churches have directly participated in the support of 174 church planters. This number represents a full 33% of our member churches, standing in stark contrast to a national Southern Baptist average of 6% of churches who have engaged in sponsoring new churches." The SBCV's leadership realized very early that in order for the convention to grow numerically, it would need to place a strong emphasis on starting new churches. Church planting is woven into the very fiber of the convention. The money spent on church planting efforts attests to this fact. Additionally, the SBCV is committed to helping approximately 500 to 1,000 churches start 400 new congregations by the year 2020.

Church planting continues to be a top priority for the SBCV. Approximately fifty percent of all budgeted receipts that remain in the state are used for starting new congregations. From its infancy, many within the organization recognized the evangelical impact church planting would have on the convention's future. Dr. Chauncey summarizes the reasoning behind the convention's drive toward helping churches begin another work. He states:

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268 Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, Book of Reports, *Annual Homecoming: Pushing Back the Darkness through Evangelism*, First Baptist Church, Norfolk, Virginia, November 8-10, 2009, 34.
"It’s not everything but it’s our future. . . . And so logically, how are you going to survive as a State Convention? You have got to start more churches. . . . there’s no way you’re going to change America or change the world if you don’t start more churches. I don’t care if you’ve got 50 churches in a small town, somewhere there’s still lost people in that town. . . . So that’s why I say church planting [is] not only our future, it’s the future of the Southern Baptist Convention. . . . Well, if you don’t have a healthy existing church you’re not going to start it because churches start churches. So if we don’t help do church health, than our church planting efforts are going to be curtailed. . . . And a church is not healthy unless it’s reproducing."269

It is also interesting to note the SBCV strongly believes in healthy churches. It continues to assist churches with church health assessment tools. The convention understands that a healthy church will reproduce itself.

The chart below verifies just how much the convention has grown since its birth in 1996. From a fledgling fellowship to a model organization, the SBCV is charting a course worthy of emulating. The numbers speak for themselves. Their conservative message and methods have resonated deep within the hearts of many Virginia Baptists. Churches around the state continue to join forces funneling their Cooperative Program giving through the time-tested personnel of the SBCV.

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269 Doyle Chauncey, Interview.
Much has transpired since the early days of the SBCV Fellowship. A strong belief in the missional power of the Cooperative Program and an unwavering obligation to the Great Commission drove men and women to action. At the time, pushing back the darkness amid the surging tide of cultural relativism amounted to a Goliath-sized challenge. During the 80's and early 90's, conservatives encountered a barrage of resistance as they endeavored to alter the liberal direction of the BGAV. Out-manned and clearly out-voted, the growing band of conservatives made little head-way within the heavily bureaucratic organization. Compelled by conviction, conservative Baptists living in Virginia were prepared for battle to fight for biblical inerrancy in order to return the convention to its conservative roots.
Originally, the concept of starting a new state convention was not a part of the plan or thinking of conservative Baptists. However, their collective belief in the inerrancy of Scriptures, the on-going political maneuvering by the BGAV leadership, the defunding of SBC entities within the BGAV's annual budget, and the direct financial support of liberal organizations forced conservatives to take action. Still, the most damaging blow to conservatives happened in 1994 when the BGAV's Bylaws were changed. The change only recognized messengers from churches that contributed to the Virginia portion of the BGAV's annual budget. The change meant that conservative Southern Baptist churches in the state of Virginia would be allowed fewer messengers at future BGAV meetings. The political tactic left the conservatives with very few options.

Reflecting on how God had blessed the SBCV, Evangelist Bob Davis articulated it well when he said

> . . . I think in the beginning something that the Lord really did was He got us going in the right direction by giving us a leader that knew what he wanted to do and lead us in the right way. He gave us the wisdom to make the right decision about our purpose. To give us a vision and idea of what to name [ourselves] so we could be identified. And the Lord gave us the wisdom and the opportunity to be inclusive of some independent churches that wanted to be identified with a group, but did not really have anybody they felt comfortable identifying with, like the Tabernacle in Danville, Thomas Road, other churches around that are smaller and larger, none larger than Thomas Road. . . . I praise the Lord for it. And I believe that the Lord, through the wisdom . . . of Doyle and his leadership, gave us the regional leaders that we needed in the areas where we were and they really worked well.\(^\text{270}\)

God has seen fit to bestow on the convention men and women "who had understanding of the times, to know what . . . to do."\(^\text{271}\)

\(^{270}\) Bob Davis, Interview.

\(^{271}\) 1 Chron. 12:32 (NKJV).
The financial growth of the SBCV has been remarkable (see chart below). Its first recorded check was in the amount of $356.00.\textsuperscript{272} From its first simplistic budget of $75,000, written on a napkin at a local restaurant, to its current 2010 budget of $9,200,000, the SBCV continues to model conservative fiscal principles. The chart below paints a vivid picture of financial growth of the SBCV.

\begin{center}
\textbf{Cooperative Program Giving} \\
(in millions)
\end{center}

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\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chart.png}
\caption{Cooperative Program Giving (in millions)}
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It is also interesting to note that based upon the financial records for 2009, the combined Cooperative Program Ministry Plan, SBC Cooperating Agreements, special offerings, designated gifts, and Covenant Partnerships, cooperative giving through the SBCV exceeded $10.8 million dollars.

\textsuperscript{272} Doyle Chauncey, Interview.
The historic division of a 50/50 Cooperative Program giving plan between the SBCV and the Southern Baptist Convention not only challenges established state conventions; it also clearly displays the convention's strong support for and confidence in the Cooperative Program. Dr. Jeff Ginn expressed his thoughts by saying, "The 50/50 split, that’s a hallmark, and that’s a highlight. Only two conventions nationally match that." Conservatives were very excited and tremendously supportive of the financial arrangement between the state and national convention. Again, Evangelist Bob Davis captures the feelings of many when he said, "I like the division that we have of our Cooperative Program money. The Lord led us to do that, and I think that was a great thing, and there was, that I remember, no disagreement with it. They were on board." Additionally, before the founding of the SBCV, Dr. Chauncey revealed the reasoning behind the 50/50 Cooperative Program distribution. He said,

. . . my assignment was to bring back what we needed to do to become a convention. So that was my job. So what I did is to go back to what I always knew at the old convention was that the amount going to the missionaries and to the national causes was on a decline and more and more was being held in the State Conventions to fund their ministries. And so the percentage, and I knew the history well enough that the original history when it was formed in 1925 was that every state had agreed to do a 50/50. So the Cooperative Program when it was formed that was sort of the agreement among the founders of the Cooperative Program that the states would share on a 50/50 basis. So I suggested to the group, we drew the budget up, I said, "From now on we ought to do 50/50 and never go down." And so far nobody has ever made a recommendation, they made a recommendation to go up, but they’ve never made a recommendation to go down.

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273 Jeffery Ginn, Interview.
274 Bob Davis, Interview.
275 Doyle Chauncey, Interview.
With regard to the Cooperative Program, the SBCV continues to set the pace, prove its effectiveness, and models what the founders of the Cooperative Program originally envisioned.

One of the keys to the SBCV's success has been its willingness to decentralize the organization. Decentralization has enabled the convention to indentify current needs and act quickly to meet the needs at hand. Churches have responded with great enthusiasm to the decentralized structure of the SBCV. The convention is merely an extension of the local church. It exists to serve the churches. Decentralization became "a delivery system of services and ministries"\textsuperscript{276} for local churches. In an interview with Rev. Carl Weiser, he captured the mindset of the SBCV when he said, "We present the story of the churches. It’s not the story of the Conventions, but it’s the story of the churches. And I think that more than anything else, it helps our people, when they come to the Convention meeting, to see that it’s about them."\textsuperscript{277}

Furthermore, the Executive Director/Treasurer transition between Dr. Chauncey and Dr. Ginn has been both smooth and productive. Both men are highly praised by their peers. Dr. Burris and General Pinckney paid a great compliment to both men when they said:

I think that another key was, of course, electing Doyle. That really stands out. . . . And then of course with Jeff Ginn coming on, I think he was an excellent choice. I think he’s the man of the hour. And I’m just really excited about, I’m proud of what we’ve done, but I think the best days are ahead.\textsuperscript{278}

\textsuperscript{276} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{277} Carl Weiser, Interviewed by Jeffrey R. Pinder, in an office at Hyland Heights Baptist Church, Rustburg, Virginia, July 31, 2009.

\textsuperscript{278} Kelly Burris, Interview.
And so I just praise the Lord for what he has done in Virginia with the SBCV and with Doyle Chauncey's leadership, and now Jeff Ginn’s leadership. And I look forward to many more years of progress here, and many, many, many more souls saved as a result.279

Dr. Tim Hight commented on Dr. Ginn's leadership skills by saying, "... one of his strengths is that he is a visionary leader ... he is the visionary that God is using to help shape our convention for the next decade and God is doing a great work through him."280

Leadership remains an essential link in the organizational structure and future direction of the SBCV.

The SBCV continues to direct its churches and their people to a renewed emphasis on the Great Commission. Under the leadership of the new Executive Director/Treasurer, Dr. Jeff Ginn, the Executive Board, on January 27, 2009, launched an initiative entitled Vision 20/20. A team of sixteen key leaders from across the state (regionally, ethnically, and generationally) was assembled to focus primarily on how the SBCV might better assist local congregations in their task of fulfilling the Great Commission. Their assignment entailed a review of the past, an in-depth examination of present ministry, and a clear vision for the up-coming decade. Their ultimate goal for the SBCV was to bring glory to God.281

Between January and November 2009, the Vision 20/20 Team officially met four times. The Executive Board was kept abreast of all the findings by the team. The sixteen-member team divided themselves into focus groups in order to faithfully execute

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279 T. C. Pinckney, Interview.


their assigned tasks. On April 27, 2009, the team conducted a comprehensive survey among church leaders from SBCV churches. The results, posted on May 6, 2009, revealed that the overwhelming majority of church leaders believe the SBCV remains theologically sound, culturally relevant, and missiologically effective. The Vision 20/20 Team also revisited the SBCV’s purpose statement, doctrinal parameters, and core values and found them to be a true reflection of the convention’s foundational convictions. As the team reviewed ministry areas and growth patterns, it became even more obvious that God’s hand of blessing was upon the SBCV.282

The Vision 20/20 Team made the six following recommendations to the Executive Board during its October 2009 meeting:

1. A multiplying missional network . . . in which the number of congregations grows from over 500 to over 1,000, including the planting of 400 new congregations.

   Church planting has been the heartbeat of the SBCV since its inception. The recommendation is that we hold to that priority with an even greater zeal. The V20/20 survey indicated that SBCV respondents strongly held that Virginia and the District of Columbia are both underevangelized and underchurched mission fields. Through the planting of churches, both evangelism and discipleship are accelerated. The SBCV will partner with local congregations to insure that healthy churches plant healthy churches that will plant healthy churches.

2. A maturing missional network . . . in which at least 500 congregations progress to the next level of congregational health.

   Churches may be plotted along a spectrum of congregational health. This ranges from churches that are near dissolution to those that are impacting the world in transformational ways. The SBCV will partner with interested local congregations to facilitate an evaluation, prescription, and implementation of a course of action that will, by God’s grace, enable them to reach the next level on the spectrum of congregational health.

3. A mobilizing missional network . . . in which the number of congregations committed to the Acts 1:8 Challenge grows from approximately 50 to over 500.

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282 Ibid.
Churches do not exist merely for the benefit of the local membership. The church exists to fulfill the Great Commission. The SBCV will partner with local congregations to facilitate missional impact in their Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of earth.

4. A sacrificial missional network . . . in which ever greater resources are channeled to national and international mission causes through the Cooperative Program (CP).

The SBCV will partner with national entities to fulfill the Great Commission. The SBCV already sets a national standard by forwarding a full 50% of its CP receipts to the SBC. The V20/20 Team recommends that this be increased by a quarter of a percent each year for the next 10 years, subject to an annual review. This is based on the conviction that God’s Word is true: “Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you” (Luke 6:38). Early estimates are that this will mean an additional 1.2 million dollars for national and international mission causes over the next decade.

The missional needs within the Commonwealth of Virginia and the District of Columbia are staggering. The case could be made that all mission receipts could be kept within our boundaries and put to good use. There is that much lostness within the geographic boundaries of our convention. Local churches might employ a similar argument for keeping their resources localized. However, a paradox is at work here. As we each sacrifice to reach a lost world, the Lord will entrust more resources to us to reach our Jerusalem and Judea. The V20/20 Team urges that this challenge be taken up by every believer and every constituent church in our convention as the SBCV sets the example.

5. A streamlined missional network . . . in which the decentralized model of ministry for which the SBCV is noted nationally will be furthered so that the state convention becomes even more accessible to the local church.

In its last major restructuring, the SBCV emphasized a decentralized model of state ministry that has proven effective. Other conventions from across the nation have embraced this paradigm. The V20/20 Team recommends an accentuation of the decentralized approach by realigning into five major regions, each of which will have clusters organized around demographic centers.

The streamlining of our convention will also extend to programmatic scheduling. Many of the training events that have historically been offered will be coalesced into a new conference called E412. E412 is an equipping conference that weds together the best elements of many of our conferences, including the Evangelism and Church Leadership Conferences. E412 will be the major spring semester event while the Annual Homecoming will be the major fall semester event.
6. A contextualized missional network . . . in which the timeless principles of God’s Word are communicated effectively in the ever-changing culture in which we live. Further research into the name and branding of our convention should be undertaken.\textsuperscript{283}

The Executive Board enthusiastically endorsed the recommendations and requested that they be presented to the full convention at its November 8-10, 2009 meeting in Norfolk. Messengers at the 2009 SBCV Annual Homecoming not only overwhelmingly approved the six recommendations, they also established a six-member Steering Team to interface with SBCV’s staff in developing strategies for implementing the six stated goals. This team would report to the messengers at the 2010 SBCV Annual Homecoming.

Dr. Ginn’s vision for the SBCV is clearly rooted in the Scriptures (Acts & Ephesians 4). The future impact of the SBCV rests upon the mutual cooperation of affiliated churches. As churches multiply, more congregations spring to life and lives are changed. Churches are also commanded by the Lord Jesus to make disciples. When local churches are organized around and for the Great Commission, spiritual maturation begins to move new believers from infancy to adulthood. Thus, mature healthy churches are better equipped to mobilize their resources for a greater global impact. The challenge is for local churches to commit to an \textit{Acts 1:8} strategy to reach their “Jerusalem, . . . all Judea, . . . Samaria, and to the end of the earth”\textsuperscript{284} for Christ.

The SBC of Virginia is simplistic in its structure yet multifaceted in its ministry. Its birth, growth, and evangelistic impact can only be attributed to God Himself. Its future is bright. Its goals are attainable. Its vision is clear. The concluding remarks

\textsuperscript{283} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{284} Acts 1:8 (NKJV).
recorded in the report given by the Vision 20/20 Team best summarize the feelings of many uniquely aligned with the SBCV. "God’s face has shown upon us. Our past is cause for celebration. Our present is reassuring. Our future is challenging. Thankfully, we do not head there alone. He who has accompanied us from the beginning goes before us. May He grant us grace to keep pace."


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_____. *Third Annual Meeting*. First Baptist Church, Norfolk, Virginia, November 7, 1995.

_____. *Fourth Annual Meeting*. Grove Avenue Baptist Church, Richmond, Virginia, September 16, 1996.


_____ \textit{Annual Meeting: Partners in the Harvest}. West Salem Baptist Church, Salem, Virginia, October 12, 1999.

_____ \textit{Annual Meeting: Speaking the Truth in Love}. Liberty Baptist Church, Hampton, Virginia, October 9-10, 2000.

_____ \textit{Annual Meeting: Celebrating our Distinctiveness}. Grove Avenue Baptist Church, Richmond, Virginia, November 13-14, 2001.

_____ \textit{Annual Meeting: Completing the Task to Light Up Virginia & the World with the Gospel}. First Baptist Church, Roanoke, Virginia, November 11-12, 2002.

_____ \textit{Annual Meeting: Risking to Rescue}. London Bridge Baptist Church, Virginia Beach, Virginia, November 10-11, 2003.


_____ \textit{Annual Meeting: Renewing your Passion}. Grove Avenue Baptist Church, Richmond, Virginia, November 14-15, 2005.

_____ \textit{Annual Meeting: More Beyond}. First Baptist Church, Roanoke, Virginia, November 13-14, 2006.


_____ \textit{Annual Homecoming: Pushing Back the Darkness through Prayer}. First Baptist Church, Roanoke, Virginia, November 10-11, 2008.

_____ \textit{Annual Homecoming: Pushing Back the Darkness through Evangelism}. First Baptist Church, Norfolk, Virginia, November 8-10, 2009.


An interview with Reverend Howard Baldwin
Conducted in the home of the Jeffrey R. Pinder, Amelia, Virginia, July 1, 2009

HOWARD: First let me talk about why we needed a change in Virginia. There was a change taking place in the Southern Baptist Convention. It had drifted along for so many years. They had the old school in place. When Paige Patterson came along, and Judge Pressler at the conference in New Orleans, they said something needs to change. The change was needed because theological education was drifting towards theological liberalism. Paige Patterson and Judge Pressler said this needs to change. So the number one problem was the drift toward theological liberalism in our seminaries. Southwestern was the most conservative. Southeastern was probably the most liberal. Southern was right behind. Golden Gate was still pretty much conservative. Midwestern had drifted toward theological liberalism. So change needed to happen. Paige Patterson had the background theologically. Judge Pressler knew how to do it politically because he was a lawyer, and he was a judge too. So they brought these two ideas. They decided that the only way to change the Southern Baptist Convention and to change the seminaries was to elect a president of the Southern Baptist Convention who was conservative, and who would take the heat and appoint people that were conservative for a boards and agencies, and then they would put up nominations for conservatives from the states that would make a difference in appointing people and nominating people who were conservatives to the Board of Trustees for these institutions.

JEFF: That was in the 70’s right?

HOWARD: In the 70’s, yeah. They would take time to purge and it would take ten to fifteen years and this is why it did, because some of the boards had trustees that stayed on for four years, and if you were a good boy, you could stay on for another four years. Some Seminaries it’s five years. This is tradition, of course preachers change from state to state and place to place and lay people so they would not get appointed from that state if they moved, but this took place. James Hefley has a written a number of books. Have you read any of them?

JEFF: No.

HOWARD: Well, I will lend you some of his books. He wrote a series of books on the development that is taking place in the Southern Baptist Convention.

JEFF: How do you spell his last name?

HOWARD: I am not sure. He wrote year by year the developments of the Southern Baptist Convention. He is a good guy, he is a writer. He kept up with it, and has five, six
maybe even seven books that he wrote. They are very good. I know him from Chicago because he was a writer up there, and sometimes when I was out on revival I would get him to come to my church and preach. He did a good job of documenting all this controversy and the people involved in it.

JEFF: You have these books?

HOWARD: Yes.

JEFF: Awesome. Another one that I found was by Dr Jerry Sutton, a professor at Liberty now. He put one out called “The Baptist Reformation.” It’s on conservative resurgence. James Hefley sounds like he has done more because he was right there when it was happening.

HOWARD: Things needed to change and slowly they changed, very slowly because the others were not entrenched in the conversation because they grew in size because the liberals were very well organized. And they put things in the state papers like the Religious Herald that were not absolutely true, that scared people. You know here comes the fundamentalist, they are going to do this and they are going to do that. Most of it was not accurate. They used scare tactics; well it meant those people went to the convention. We found we had to counter that and tell the truth, and get people involved and tell them about why we needed the change in our institution in our convention. Here in Virginia was the most liberal convention of any state. The state here is run by the voice of the Religious Herald. And Julian Pentecost when he came on the scene, then the Southern Baptist Convention said let’s lower the rhetoric; let’s stop calling people by name, you know like fundamentalists. When I went to Seminary they didn’t pronounce it fundamentalist, they pronounced it fun-dam-entalist that was the concept they pushed all the time. That if there was legalism, then there was wrong. There was legalism, and Julian Pentecost would not adhere to the Southern Baptist piece. He was the editor of the Religious Herald. There was a fellow named Ruben Alley he was the previous editor of the Religious Herald. He was a liberal par excellence. He had a son, Bob Alley, who was professor of Religion at The University of Richmond, who went to the Unitarian church at Christmas time and denied the virgin birth. He did not believe in Christ. He was at Southern Seminary and got his basic degree in Theology there and was working on his doctorate. He and his wife were the people who were the host and hostess of the faculty center. At Southern Seminary there was a crisis in which 13 professors were fired. And they were having dialog with the President who was Duke McCall at the time and they were in the faculty center. It was closed media they were trying to find some solution to their controversy, back and forth. Bob Alley was supposed to be off limits to the press or anybody, well, he had his ear up to the whole thing listening to what was going on and he was feeding the information back to his father who was editor of the Religious Herald and this was being publicized in the Religious Herald. Now the professors most of them were liberal that were in this thing. But they used the European concept of a university divinity school in which they wouldn’t teach many classes they would just sit and write books you know. They would be the scholars but this is not what
our seminaries are about. The reason I know this is because I was the friend of one of the professors who was Clyde Francisco and he told me the story about what had happened. So that controversy at Southern Seminary blew up even much beyond it should have. Those thirteen professors were fired. I was there at the time. Some of them said, “Bye, good riddance!” There were some of the most liberal ones that were there and it purged some of these out of the system. And probably, I think it’s my personal opinion, I think some of the trustees were glad to get rid of some of the liberals that were on the faculty at that time. Thirteen in a Seminary that size was a tremendous amount. Duke McCall survived it, the controversy between him and the professors that’s what they wanted to do. This was part of the mix of the Southern Baptist Convention, here in Virginia because of Robert Alley. And Ruben and Bob Alley both of them are dead now. This thing got blown way up here in Virginia.

JEFF: Who was the guy that took over after Ruben Alley?

HOWARD: Julian Pentecost. He was Pastor of Grace Baptist Church before he went there. Grace Baptist Church is my home church, where I and my wife grew up. Where we were married, where I was ordained, both of our parent’s were members of that church, both of our father’s were deacons of that church.

JEFF: Is he still the editor?

HOWARD: No, he came after; we thought he would be a breath of fresh air. It’s a power thing. The editor of the Religious Herald is the most powerful position among Baptists in the state. He has the ear of the people. Clingenpeel became the editor after Julian Pentecost, and Clingenpeel has now become Pastor of River Road Baptist Church which is the most liberal church in the State of Virginia. That just shows the direction. And the liberals were organized by the previous Pastor of River Road Church. They had meetings there to organize the moderate faction. This is the background of why we needed change in the General Baptist Association of Virginia. T.C. Pinckney is the number one person who was there in the forefront. He was getting the conservative pastors together talking. The person who invited me was Vander Warner. He was right there in the beginning and did a good job in getting the conservative pastors together with T.C. Pinckney and invited me to one of these meetings and they usually took place at a luncheon after one of the sessions of the General Baptist Association of Virginia. So we would have a luncheon together. And T.C. Pinckney, he would address us and let us know what was going on and the liberals were very strong and well organized. In fact, the Executive Director at the time commented and said “The moderates are just better organized than you guys are.” So if you are going to make a difference, you need to be better organized.” We would go to the Pastor’s Conference and that is where some of the problems were because they would have speakers from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. A professor, who had not been given tenure, would address it and tell bad things about the Southern Baptist Convention. And it was just garbage. And the sessions would be just dead as they could be with the Virginia Baptist Association. We would ask for prayer, and I know Charles Fuller who was Pastor at one of the second or third largest churches
in Virginia, a church that gave the largest amount to the cooperative program or the second largest, he got up and asked us to have a conservative prayer emphasis. It was...we are going to have it our way or no way. And after one of these meetings, we got together for lunch a whole bunch of us. And we were in a cafeteria. I am not sure where it was, I wish I could remember the date of it, but I can’t remember the date and in that meeting I said, “You know fella's, I'm not coming to these meetings anymore. This is a waste of time and energy because we are getting nowhere. It’s a waste of money, and resources. We need fellowship among ourselves. Why don’t we call a complication of the Baptist churches in Virginia. And those who want to come and form a fellowship can do so. And that’s what we did. And that is what resulted in the Forest Road.” We didn’t know how many people would come, they packed it out. We organized at the meeting a fellowship, it wasn’t a convention.

JEFF: January 28, 1993 at Old Forest Road Baptist Church

HOWARD: That’s right, we formed some committees. You know when Baptists get together they are going to form something, organize, or eat!

JEFF: Was part of the concept to get like-minded people to organize within the BGAV?

HOWARD: To make an impact within the BGAV. We started out with giving and nominating a candidate for president of the BGAV. He was a sacrificial lamb. He wasn’t going to get it. I got more votes than anyone else in any other years, but still I knew I wasn’t going to win. But what we had done, we also formed a Bible Conference which happened at the same time as the Pastor’s Conference. The Pastor’s Conference had become liberal. And of course we formed that and it grew, it grew tremendously. And we had National Southern Baptist speakers in to address the group and that year I ran for President of the BGAV. Land, who is with the ethics committee, he spoke and I spoke, and man we had the churches packed. It was really growing. And we did that for several years. And then they appointed a Peace Committee of so many moderates and so many conservatives.

JEFF: Who appointed it? The BGAV?

HOWARD: I don’t know who appointed it. To tell you the truth. I wasn’t in on that. When they formed this thing, they got together at several meetings. But the moderates came to the conclusion that there was no middle ground. And therefore, the moderates felt they had to go their separate ways. The fellowship had an executive meeting, and this is where they went from there. I have a list of names of influential people: Kelly Burris who was right in the midst of things - a tremendous help; Bob Davis who is an evangelist, he can tell you a lot of things. He and I were the only evangelists in Virginia. Wayne Dishman, he’s not around here anymore. Robbie Gorby, Ladysmith Baptist Church, Ron Boswell, Grove Avenue. He was going through some depths. He didn’t want to break with the BGAV. But he wrote some strong statements with his church to show the difference, and his church voted to break with them and go uniquely aligned.
Fred Caffey, First Baptist. He is a layman. Doyle Chauncey was in it from the very beginning. Kenny Gooch, Terry Harper he is a good resource. Terry and I did not agree with the forming of the convention as early as it was but he pushed, and he got it. Terry did a good job. He was President of the Convention.

JEFF: He was the first one.

HOWARD: Right. Jesse Jackson. He was in on this thing too. David Johnson is from England. We had a mission partnership over there that I did. The fellow that was with him invited him to preach at his church and then this church in Rileyville heard him. And they called him his pastor. And he almost starved to death in England. He did great work. John Marks was in the middle of everything. T.C. Pinckney, Phyllis Rangle is a layperson, her husband was a Professor at Virginia Tech. And she is as conservative as can be. And she was on the IMB board when I was on it. She is one of my pray partners, and still contributes faithfully. Steven Smith was at Salem Baptist Church. He’s now a Professor at Southwestern Seminary and his father was President of Southern Baptist Convention. Bailey Smith, that’s his father. Mike Palmer, John Sims was a lawyer, was on IMB, and was with us all the way. Bill Templeton is a story in himself. He was there in the very beginning. And he’s kind of drifted away. He is up in the Charlottesville area and was at Northside Baptist Church. And has left there to start another church. Bill invited Vander Warner and me to come up to his church. This made a tremendous impression on me because he had there Pastors from this conference that we had. And these guys were I would say disenfranchised Pastors in the Virginia area. They were out in small churches. Big churches were running everything, you know, and these were not connected. The thing that we had as a vision to begin with was the small church. To try reach the small churches, to provide conferences and helps for the small churches, to help them grow and to start new churches. Not to take over these big churches. And some of the big churches came in like First Baptist Church of Roanoke. But that is not what we were setting our sites on. It was to help the smaller churches. Bill Templeton made a tremendous impression; he was a good friend of Paige Patterson.

JEFF: So these people would be good for me to gain information from.

HOWARD: Yes.

JEFF: That would be awesome.

HOWARD: This brochure I have here, I wrote it, and it talks about the early beginnings. Tommy Taylor had really taken a stand, he became the first president of the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia. In the beginning the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia was just a fellowship.

JEFF: So he was the first president of the fellowship?
HOWARD: This tells some of the history of biblical authority, missions and evangelism and cooperation with the Southern Baptist. Here are some newsletters that go back to 1994. I put this out when I went to different churches so they would know what this thing was all about. There is a vision statement on the back. The SBCV has a cardboard box of records I gave to them. Here is a paper written by the moderates of their plan to disenfranchise with the Southern Baptist. It was a five year plan to either take over or start another convention. It was not our intention to start a new convention.

JEFF: I have heard that same statement shared by numerous people within the organization. The names you gave me were like founders who were in the trenches. I've heard that phrase, and it was never their intention to start a new convention.

HOWARD: The other state conventions have never been as moderate or as liberal as the Virginia State Convention. I am not talking from a viewpoint that I dislike the Virginia Baptist State Association. That was not our intention at all. In fact my wife’s great, great grandfather was one of the founders of the Virginia Baptist State Association. So I don’t have any animosity toward them, I came from Grace Baptist Church. Julian Pentecost influenced them so much that they broke from the Southern Baptist Convention completely and became a member of the American Baptist Convention, and they have a woman Pastor.

JEFF: What were some of the preventative measures that you guys tried to use to try and not let a split happen?

HOWARD: Well, we were participants in the BGAV, and went to the conventions. There were very few of us who were elected to Boards and vacancies. But the Virginia Baptist Board was made up of representatives from the different associations. The associations most of the time elected people to go and be a part of the BGAV state board. But even these came to a place where they were not happy. They saw the movement toward liberalism in the Virginia Baptist State Association. George Mullinax, he is not on any of those lists, but he pastored here in Virginia for a very long time. And he was on the state board, and he saw the movement. Julia Easter was on it, and she saw the movement of liberalism kicking in. And she wasn’t happy. In fact, before you came, this church was moving toward the SBCV. And she was probably one of the prime movers and was not happy about the way things were going.

JEFF: From what you are saying, there were dialogs trying to take place with the leadership of the BGAV and the conservatives?

HOWARD: Yeah, they tried to get together and see if they could work out some things. But they came to the conclusion and the moderates came to the conclusion, and said, “There is no room. It looks like we have got to go our separate ways.”

JEFF: So basically what you are saying is there was no middle ground?
HOWARD: Yeah, they were saying there was no middle ground. They had been in power for so long, they had the backing of the seminaries. They had the backing of the old guard. It was the same ones that came in, and they had decided who was going to be president of the Southern Baptist Convention, and who was going to be on these board and agencies. A lot of the boards and agencies you got on, a Southern Baptist board or agency like the International Mission Board, because you were well known. You were pastor of a large church, money talks. If your church gave a lot to the cooperative program you went right on up to the top!

JEFF: Is that professor still there?

HOWARD: Yes, he still there now. I am not saying who he is because he is a dear friend, but I believe he always believed in the Bible. But if you are in a camp, it’s easy to say I am in this camp and identify with them to seek peace. The reason I can get into this thing is I didn’t owe the Baptist General Convention the time of day! Being an evangelist, I wasn’t looking for them to endorse me. In fact, I came back from England, having pastored in England, Chicago for six years and in England for three years. I came back to start this ministry of evangelism. And so I thought the right thing to do would be to go see Dr. Stevenson, who at that time was the Executive Director at the Virginia Baptist General Association. So I made an appointment, and I went up there, told him I was starting this ministry of evangelism, and I wanted him to know I wasn’t jumping into something. He said, "Well, I have been away and I don’t have time to talk to you." He made a drastic mistake then, because when you turn someone away like that, you know like I don’t have time to talk to you…I went the same day to the office of the state association to find out how I could continue my relief in annuity. I had it in England, connected with the Illinois state convention. They said, "Well, you have to get permission from Dr. Stevenson." I said, "Well thank you just the same," and I walked out and that was the end of that thing. Now as far as some of them at the Baptist General State Association they were helpful. The fellow that was head of the evangelism department had me on the program. I also spoke at Eagle Eyrrie and was the guest speaker at both Hargrave and Fork Union. See, I was participating. When Dr. Stevenson’s wife was elected to the International Mission Board about the same time I was. He had forgotten all about this conversation you know, and we were friends. I wouldn’t turn my back on these guys. But whenever we approached it…it was always…they used the word fundamentalist. And when you have been to the seminary for three years, this word is almost like a curse word, to call you a fun-dam-mental-ist.

JEFF: Very derogatory.

HOWARD: That’s what they were doing and for them to use that in the Religious Herald here, it was doing the same thing - was putting people down. Now, I was really fortunate. I grew up in Grace Church. But I was fortunate, because I went to Pastor a little country church, Ragland Memorial up in Goochland. After my freshman year and those people were as conservative as they could be. They introduced me to things I had never heard of before. One day two little old ladies came up and said, "Pastor, we think
you need some help, would you mind us sending you a subscription to our little newspaper?" I said, "I can use all the help I can get." They said, "It’s called Sword of the Lord, have you ever heard of it?" I said, "No ma’am." Well, they sent me that thing and I tell you what it opened up a new world to me that I had not known. I mean sermons by Charles Spurgeon, by R.G. Lee, there were even articles by Billy Graham in it at that time. And, . . . but you see the mainline moderate, liberal southern Baptist, John R. Rice was a Mahatma. They didn’t want anything to do with him. He was a fundamentalist. But if it hadn’t been for John R. Rice, I don’t think we would have had personal soul-winning made alive. I found a book down in Grace Baptist Church library. I picked it up when I was a teenager, and read it was called, Soul-Winning, and I read it, and man it set my soul on fire to win for Christ personally. And that church over in Goochland gave me a Scofield Bible, and it was the most beautiful Bible you ever laid your eyes on. Now, this was over fifty years ago, it was made out of seal skin, it cost them thirty-five dollars over fifty years ago, it was like gold, I’ve still got it, it’s a rag now. But, they prayed for me, they encouraged me, they mentored me, they called me for one year! I didn’t know what an annual call was, and I had two more years in Richmond so they called me for two more years. I found out I could finish Richmond by going to summer school in three years, so that’s what I did. And after we got married, we moved to Louisville, Kentucky. A few years ago they were without a pastor, the congregation had gone down. They only had about seventeen in Sunday School. So they asked me to come for a homecoming, and I had preached revivals there so they called me back as interim Pastor. So you do as much as a interim pastor as you would a full-time pastor.

JEFF: Let me go back over some of this, you have given me a lot of information. In the early stages of fellowship what held you all together?

HOWARD: Well, we had organized and the main thing was the inerrancy of scripture and the idea of the cooperative program. This is the thing that got us really upset because they had sought to scale back as much as they could giving back to the Southern Baptist Convention. They were angry with it because it was conservative resurgence. So they put people on a track, and the track that they put everybody on was cut back 17% and that was going to the Southern Baptist Convention, the other was staying here in the state. People could choose, but you had to go through a fight to be able to choose one of the other tracks.

JEFF: I know about the four giving tracks. So in the ‘80’s they didn’t have these four tracks. Tell me about this format?

HOWARD: Yes, they went to the format, because they wanted to cut Southern Baptists as much as they could out. Now, this was seventeen percent, you pay in half as far as foreign missions was concerned. And that’s where I drew the line because I am a foreign mission supporter. I think it’s vital and important and so much of the money here in Virginia was going to the universities, like the University of Richmond and Bluefield College and these schools. Averett had long departed from what they were intended to be as Christian education. University of Richmond is no longer. I proposed we break with
them and I brought it up at the State Convention because they had this Bob Alley teaching there. They had a president that wasn’t a Baptist. He was a Presbyterian, and later on we found out he had to resign because he was an alcoholic.

JEFF: So at this point the seminary in Richmond had not come about?

HOWARD: The seminary in Richmond is a result of the resurgences in the Southern Baptist Convention. Because the professors that came to that seminary were those that could not tolerate the conservative line in the seminaries, and so they left the liberal seminaries and went to this one. One of them, Graves, his father was the dean of the school of religious education at Southern Seminary. Nice guy, he had been raised in that environment at southern seminary, he saw nothing wrong with it. He thought it was the Utopia concept, it was great as far as he was concerned and for anybody to attack that was absolutely wrong as far as he was concerned. This is why they formed that thing here in Richmond. When I ran for president of the Baptist General Association of Virginia, it was a token thing. I had spoken at a Bible conference which was huge at that time, and I had said one of the things we do not need in Virginia is a toxic theological waste dump. And they had already formed that seminary. I didn’t call it that, but it was implied. I was talking about that seminary, and it was reported on the radio that I did.

JEFF: While it was a fellowship and the months leading up to it becoming a state convention, what were some of the dynamics going on in?

HOWARD: Basically, Terry was right, we had a fellowship that was well-organized. It wasn’t any question, we met at the First Baptist Church in Norfolk. We went through all the processes just like a state convention. We were ready. I thought it would take a little bit longer you know. But we were ready. And I was on the executive committee then. We had the state meetings which was a Bible Conference.

JEFF: How did they know in September 1996 that it was time to vote to be state convention? What was the final green light that convinced you now is the time, it’s time to vote? How did that decision get reached? I imagine an executive committee was involved to communicate that to the others.

HOWARD: Well, we knew it was coming. It was like seeing the handwriting on the wall through all these processes that were going on. It wasn’t just a fellowship; it was the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia. Now, when we organized into a state convention I was opposed to using the word state convention then. But I got voted down. I got ready to walk out, but the writing was on the wall and since then what do we call ourselves? The SBC of Virginia. People think it’s Southern Baptist Convention, but its Southern Baptist Conservatives. That’s why I didn’t want that word in there because it was like waving a red flag. But it’s there and it differentiates us from the others. And no longer are we and from the conception idea of rating the Baptist Convention of Virginia of its churches. It was to start this new convention if someone was interested, we were not going out there soliciting someone to it. If they were interested and they wanted to
talk, Doyle Chauncey would go over and talk with them. Or I would go over and tell them what the conservatives were and what it was. But Doyle Chauncey was the perfect one because he had been the treasurer of the SBCV, he had been the treasurer of the BGAV, he’s mild-mannered he was better than that interim executive director that they had because that guy is a bit fiery you know is me and Doyle comes in and the defenses are lowered because Doyle is not going to push them. He’s not going to knock them in the head. He’s just going to give them the facts, and he does it with a sweet spirit. Now, that doesn’t mean that all the time we always agreed on everything. T.C. and I disagreed on some things. But T.C. is a dear, dear, friend, and this thing would have never come about if it hadn’t been for T.C. T.C. Pinckney was a catalyst to organize it and on that very first meeting at Old Forest Road we organized something. If you organize something, it gets bigger and bigger, and bigger and bigger until it’s at the point of becoming a state convention. And we had been through all the processes. We had tried to make peace. We tried to be included in things. We were rejected, rejected! Rejected because it wasn’t the general consensus of the BGAV. It was a few liberals in this state that were going to have their way or die. And they also connected up with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

JEFF: I was going to get to that in a minute. That must have made an impact which was an issue too.

HOWARD: It gave a choice. They stay in but they are really out. In the Southern Baptist Convention they don’t give. One of the proposals that I made when we first started was let’s give fifty percent to the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program, now that was the original intent of the founders of the cooperative program but states didn’t get around to that. They needed more. Well, the SBCV said we will try it, and they tried it and it has prospered. Ten Million dollars a year budget now. That’s tremendous! My wife was the secretary when I was the interim; we got a huge salary each year of $10,000. Which was fine, I was in full-time evangelism, living off love offerings, it was fine.

JEFF: Do you have any info, some of these go down to the constitution and the purpose, do you have any idea on how the process was done, how the SBCV came up with their constitution?

HOWARD: We had a constitution for the fellowship.

JEFF: O.K. So, was it the model? So they were able to make some changes as the association got bigger? I am not sure if they did or not.

HOWARD: Well you know, a constitution is a constitution. And we modeled ours off of some others. We had the other state conventions.

JEFF: Do you know how they came up with their purpose statement, that they use on their web page or even on some of the documents they put out?
HOWARD: I think it was the fellowship. It was a statement we had drawn up.

JEFF: So, a lot of it grew right out of the fellowship.

HOWARD: Yes.

JEFF: Then they came up with these core values. And probably some of the others like Doyle may know how they came up with those core values, you know, foundation, fellowship, focus, function, future. I don’t know if you have any input on those things.

HOWARD: I don’t remember.

JEFF: O.K., this is all on the website, and then the objectives they have: strengthen, support, start, send.

HOWARD: Yeah, those things could have developed after I was out of the loop.

JEFF: They also have a very strong doctrinal statement on the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message came out after the convention was formed in ’96 but they adopted that in there and one of the things they have in there is, “We believe the Bible is the verbally inspired word of God” so the inerrancy which you stated was an issue.

HOWARD: Yeah, it was an issue. And in the Baptist General State Association all you have to do to be in it is to give your money. That is not true of the SBCV, you must feel like these values that are stated in the constitution are your values as well as your churches. And you will stand for the inerrancy of the word.

JEFF: Another issue was the ordaining of females into the pastoral role.

HOWARD: Right. It’s not only the ordination of women into the ministry it’s also deacons. Now, some of them disagreed with that but we took a stand on that. And they felt that it’s getting back to the Bible, where there are those that are in authority. Well, if you are going to take the inerrancy of the word where it says very plainly that the bishop is to be the husband to one wife, not the wife of one husband. And when it goes into the deacons, it’s saying virtually the same thing. Now if you are going to believe in the inerrancy of the word, you do this. I grew up in Grace church, my Dad was a deacon, my mother was a deaconess, but she wasn’t a deacon. There were two different situations the women that were deaconesses were the wives of the deacons, but the women really didn’t have much of role. And really didn’t do much of anything as far as what you would think of deacons doing. That became an issue, the other issue was on the biblical inerrancy of the word. That was a big issue. We took a firm stand on that. That’s where we parted company with the Baptist General Association of Virginia, also in the area of the Baptist Faith and Message. They were saying this was a creed. If they had only studied church history they would realize that creed is an entirely different thing. The only creed that we really got is the Bible. A confession of faith is just taking some of the essence of the
main areas of doctrine and stating them in a concise way. We don’t say to someone that you have to believe in the *Baptist Faith and Message*. If we did that it would be a creed. That’s what we have been charged for. But that’s not the case. We don’t say to a person that you have to believe this. We do say that you have to believe the Bible, and out of the Bible come the *Baptist Faith and Message*. It’s a profession of faith, but it’s not a creed.

JEFF: It’s my understanding to this day that the BGAV still does not recognize the 2000.

HOWARD: No, they take an earlier one, and the reason they do that is because of this strong statement on women. When I went to Southern Seminary as a trustee, I took the place of a trustee that had been on it for ten or twelve years. That was Julian Pentecost, he was the editor of the *Religious Herald*. Julian opposed every single thing that they came up with that was conservative. He was their pain in the neck. When I came on there they were afraid, here comes another Virginian. I am the opposite of that. To see the turn around that has happened at Southern Seminary in the years of Al Mohler. I came on the board at Southern Seminary when Al Mohler was inaugurated as president.

JEFF: Are you still on the board?

HOWARD: No.

JEFF: So you served ten years.

HOWARD: Yes. And saw a tremendous change. But at that time their whole mental attitude was on one particular theme and that was women in the ministry. And if you were to go into their bookstore at Southeastern the same thing it was filled with the feminist theology and that is the direction that every class the students would go into at Southern Seminary. They were telling us because I was on the committee for students. They would say every class we go into be it Greek or whatever the subject would come around that women need to be ordained in the ministry and be Senior Pastors. And that was their hobby horse over and over and over again. Well, with Al Mohler there things changed. He had one professor there that was a woman who was a universalist. Well, she is no longer there. They tried to get rid of a tenured professor. It’s like pulling teeth. I do not believe in tenure. That came out of Hitler’s time with the theory that Professors would be fired for their personal beliefs. And so now even in high schools, they are talking about tenure where a person can obtain a position and never be fired.

JEFF: I didn’t realize that was what tenure meant.

HOWARD: That’s what it really means; if you are a tenured professor they cannot get rid of you. I went to the University of Richmond and was talking to Dr. Motley, Dr. Motley was the president of the University Of Richmond. And then when he retired, he was a money raiser, that’s what a president is. I was talking to him about this Bob Alley who was there and who caused all these problems. His father was editor of the *Religious Herald*. He had come out against the virgin birth, and the identity of Christ. Now,
teaching religion, they transferred him to another department. I have been to some conferences he was in. He hated Billy Graham with a passion and he hated fundamentalists with a passion. I said to Dr. Motley, "Why don’t ya’ll fire him?" "I can’t he’s got tenure." He said. "We didn’t want him in the first place." That’s where politics come in. But his father was editor of the Religious Herald and so we got pressured for him to come on to the faculty of the University of Richmond. I said, "Even with his tenure, let’s buy it. We will raise the money to get rid of him or buy his tenure out." No, can’t do that, if we did it, it would be like catching a skunk by the tail. It would raise such a stink, it would just be pitiful, you see it’s connected with one university to another university. Because at Southern Seminary, when Al Mohler got rid of this woman professor, here comes the academic board of tenure from all these other theological schools and divinity schools and most of them are as liberal as all stink out anyway. They got these norms that they have in place that the school must have these things or it can lose its accreditation. See, like right now, you can look at Liberty and the democratic club on there and now they are raising a stink. Well, goodbye, you know they do not get money from the government but these other schools like Harvard and Yale, these universities they get money from the government and tenure is a big game. It’s a big thing as they are concerned. When I was on the board of trustees at Southern Seminary, I said let’s just get rid of tenure! Well, you can’t do that, that’s Virgil Harris in the academic world. I was on the board but I am not an academic and the stuff they go through makes my flesh crawl. It’s like having robes and parading on graduation, I put mine on. The only time I will wear a robe is when I am baptizing. That is the only time I will wear a robe. Wear one academically, I got one.

JEFF: I’ll do it for my own graduation.

HOWARD: Yeah, that ‘s the only thing to conform to the other ones, I’ve got one that I invested in and my son had to have one when he graduated with his Ph.D. from Penn State University. He had to buy one so we helped with that.

JEFF: The SBCV went through a time where it decentralized. So you have any info on that? Why they felt it was important? I know some people struggled with that at the time.

HOWARD: This was because of tradition I believe. I am only speaking for myself. We had all these state associations and all the fellowships instead of coming to Richmond for one big meeting they felt they needed a fellowship regionally. They needed to get together. In other words, we didn’t want to have associations, because associations tend to drain off a lot. Most churches give ten percent to the cooperative program and then they give three to five percent to the association. Well, when you boil that down to what we are giving to world missions the association is getting as much as the IMB almost as much as NAMB. I think these other things are vitally important today because most of the money stays here anyway. The church gives ten percent that means ninety percent of it stays in the community. I think we need to win this world of Christ and not to play with it. They formed these things and instead of collecting money in the local districts
they form it out of the state convention. Instead of it being a mechanism to feed the state convention, to feed the Southern Baptist Convention, these regions become ministries of the state convention and encouragers and resources to help these local churches. It was the local churches and the local ministers that wanted these regions.

JEFF: The SBCV puts a lot of emphasis on church planting, what is their thinking about Church planting? Of course I have my own personal opinion.

HOWARD: Well, new churches grow faster than old churches. They win more people to Christ than the old churches. They don’t have to adhere to their traditions like old churches do. They give more, the old churches get stayed in their ways and they won’t change. Evangelism goes by the wayside and missions go by the wayside. It gets traditional for them to give to the cooperative program instead of it being dynamic.

JEFF: It’s been neat to be here and see what’s happening with church planting in Virginia with the SBCV.

HOWARD: It’s been great. The population is growing. Here in Virginia, Northern Virginia, it’s grown tremendously. The Washington D.C. area was liberal as can be. They were bad, and so they have cut that thing off and started a regional area up there. Starting new churches up there…it’s grown, and we cannot be accused of trying to be the spoiler of taking churches out of the BGAV.

JEFF: The SBCV is going on thirteen years, what are some highlights over the years that you have seen? What has God done that you have seen?

HOWARD: I think the budget is one thing, and the giving, and the fellowship. I don’t know if you have ever been to the BGAV annual meeting.

JEFF: No I haven’t. I have been counseled not to!

HOWARD: There is a world of difference. You go to our state convention and it’s like a hallelujah revival. You go to theirs and it’s like a funeral service. It’s business and keep this thing steady, and it’s all the difference in the world. I think one of the best things that have happened and it wouldn’t have happened if it hadn’t been for the SBCV is Liberty. When I went to the University of Richmond we probably had seventy-five ministers, I bet you can’t find one now. There had to be a school that was somewhat conservative that Southern Baptists could feed into and be a part of in Virginia, and that’s happened with Liberty. And education needs to change because we are living in a technological world in which people can sit down at a computer and communicate in and take classes off their computer. I know they need the fellowship and all, of course I am an individualist. I could sit down on the computer and go on through school, I felt like classes were bull sessions, running like rabbits half the time and I can read a book faster than a professor can lecture for a semester. I think Liberty has really been tremendous in the number of graduates going to the ministry is just humungous and I think that’s vital, a
good thing. Jerry Falwell, got a bum rap from a lot. I heard one professor say, the one thing that your fellow preachers will not forgive you for is success, and Jerry Falwell was successful.

JEFF: Very much so. And at the time Lynchburg was not a big town.

HOWARD: No, everyone knew the Falwell’s, and he came back to his hometown and started a church from scratch. The difference between the Falwell’s and those who were conservative and fundamentalist like John R. Rice is that Jerry never felt like he owed his soul to them. He had Southern Baptist evangelists in, other speakers in, and his allegiance was to Christ first of all and not to a group or a society.

JEFF: Are there other things that pop into your head about the SBCV or that stand out?

HOWARD: I think our state convention, the idea that training people and offering these training courses has been good of course. I speak with a bit of precedence since my son was the initiator of that kind of thing you know but that has been good. The counseling that they have provided with churches is a good thing. The Proclaimer is good. It started out with just a sheet. The only thing I wish that the Proclaimer would do is I wish they would put more local news about our churches and the changing of preachers from one church to the other. I think they need that kind of thing in it, but I think it’s good. Sometimes it looks a little too slick to read but I think that’s good. I think the leadership has been dynamic. I think that in the very beginning they have elected good presidents and they have done that and have had good leadership along the way with a couple of exceptions like me but that has been a good thing. They have let other people in, the president now is in Christiansburg, Tim Hight, he came from outside in. He has done a tremendous ministry there especially for students at Virginia Tech, and we need more emphasis around these schools. We have seen that happen. The Baptist student unions was a little closed club for Baptists and if a person was going to get fed they didn’t go to the student Baptist union they went to campus groups, say inter varsity groups because they'd get fed there. My granddaughter is starting her junior year at Virginia Tech and she is in one of those groups. Now, both of our sons went to the Baptist Union, that’s where they found their wives, Tim he married the daughter of the Baptist Student Union director at Virginia Tech.

JEFF: Let me ask you one more question because some of this we could just have fun with over lunch. I should have asked this in the beginning, my mentors told me to ask this of every interview, is it alright that we recorded this interview?

HOWARD: Yes, now remember this is my personal interpretation. I do not speak for everybody. I can only speak for myself.
JEFF: First thing Tim, are you o.k. that I am recording this interview?

TIM: Yes Sir!

JEFF: All right! Awesome! From what you know, what led to the conservatives of Virginia being established as a fellowship in Virginia. If that’s too early for you, share what you know about that?

TIM: I don’t think so, I think there was a real spirit of disinfraction from the Baptist General Association of Virginia. And a group of people that felt because of their commitments to the Southern Baptist Convention and the scripture that they weren’t just being left out they were being pushed out. And that seemed to be what was communicated to me when I came in and what I observed.

JEFF: What would have been some of those issues that were highlighted or they were struggling with, with the BGAV?

TIM: I think they saw an obvious leftward drift in the BGAV. The BGAV was not supported by the current conservative resurgence in the Southern Baptist Convention.

JEFF: And you mean nationally by that?

TIM: Nationally, by that yeah, and they began to partner with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. And so that in ways created giving plans to allow churches to funnel their money away from the SBC and the CBF. And they were supporting Baptist joint committee and other things other organizations that people who are part of the SBCV just found unconscionable.

JEFF: What were some of the biblical issues that kept popping up...inerrancy of Scripture, ordained females? How do they play a part in all of this?

TIM: Some of the things I think they had a hard time getting strong resolutions passed on were abortion and homosexuality. They had state convention meetings and people who are now affiliated with SBCV had strong convictions in those areas. I am not sure how the role of women played out at that time. I know during those days there was a stronger move in the SBC about a much more conservative stance about women in pastoral roles. I would think there would be people in BGAV that they obviously disagreed with the latest Baptist Faith and message statement. And probably that was very obvious in those early days as well, that they didn’t hold that stance.
JEFF: So when did you move to the state with the church you are at now and when did you move to the SBCV, your affiliation with the SBCV?

TIM: I came to the state in 1996, my church was a BGAV church, I didn’t know much about BGAV. I recognized when I attended my first association meeting in the Highlands association that I was not overly welcomed. And I was not well received at that meeting. So, I knew something was up. There was an SBCV pastor at that time, of course his church was not an SBCV church at that time, only a fellowship, he was fully involved in the fellowship. He took me to lunch one day. He had been in Virginia many, many years, had been active in the BGAV. He had held positions in the BGAV. He took me to lunch and said, "Let me explain to you about the BGAV and the SBCV fellowship and what’s happening in our state through the years." And he proceeded to show me BGAV budgets through the years and how systematically monies had been allocated away from the SBC and had been designated more for state issues. And other areas of funding he introduced me to were WM1 and WM2 then WM3; just prior to that one of the first publications I received from the BGAV as a new pastor was a brochure. On the front of the brochure it said something to this effect and in fact I still have the brochure. It said here’s how your cooperative program dollars work. And I opened up the brochure to see these three giving tracks, WM1, WM2 and WM3. And WM3 was exclusively state convention causes and cooperative Baptist fellowship. And WM2 was a mixture of SBC and state convention and CBF and some very liberal causes. And there were things in that brochure that had absolutely nothing to do with the cooperative program. So, I thought you know look what they have done to mislead me to think this is how cooperative dollars are at work. When a lot of this has nothing to do with the cooperative program a bunch of it. Not Long after that, I wrote a letter to the editor of the state paper. At that time, they actually published the paper, the Herald. And in the letter to the editor, I basically said I am new in the convention. We are a WM1 church, and I have been led to believe that the money my church gives that goes to WM1 allows us to wholeheartedly support SBC causes and to be faithful to the SBC. But what that means is I put money in your right pocket and which allows money in your left pocket to support things that I find unconscionable. And so, I am supporting people who are in bed with the CBF. I might as well be in bed with the CBF myself.

JEFF: Do you have any idea when that was published? What year?

TIM: That probably was in 1996, or 1997.

JEFF: Do you know what the name of the article was?

TIM: I can find the article for you I am sure I have it saved on my computer.

JEFF: That would be great! That would provide me with a valuable resource. Do you know what people who were influential in giving direction to the SBCV? Like founders or contributors or people that you know about who were pretty significant and played key roles?
TIM: Well, the guys I met early on were Doyle Chauncey, Bob Melvin, Terry Harper, Kelly Burris. I am sure there was a broader group than that. Some guys in Roanoke those were some of the primary movers and shakers in that day. Carl Weiser perhaps I am sure there were others.

JEFF: In your mind, do you know what held the group together? SBCV started out as a fellowship and what things do you think held them together? As you now look at the SBCV and where it’s going, it gained a lot of credibility starting out with that little group of people.

TIM: Well, they were committed to the inerrancy and the infallibility to the word. They were committed to the common course of our national convention. And they were committed to evangelism and missions. And that’s the three things, the glue that held them together.

JEFF: You may not be able to answer this but do you know what measures the SBCV fellowship took to prevent a split from the BGAV?

TIM: I don’t know that they took any measures to prevent a split. I think early on many of them tried to work individually and together as BGAV churches to facilitate change in the BGAV. But when the BGAV changed their constitution so that if you designated your money away from state convention causes you did not have a vote in the state convention meeting you had no representation and no voice. I think when that happened that was the handwriting on the wall. There would have to be a new convention there would be no hope, no avenue for change in their current convention.

JEFF: You weren’t here when they actually voted to become a convention or had you just come to the state?

TIM: I had just come to the state prior to that, but I was here when they voted to become a convention. I was at the first meeting. My church had not become an SBCV church at that time. I was an individual member by my own personal giving when they were allowing individual members.

JEFF: During that year in 1996, what might have been some of the circumstances that led up to the decision? Now is the time, because there were a few people still holding back, and finding out, "Is this the right timing." And finally, it’s like now is the time.

TIM: I think probably they were hearing from more and more people that had become so disenfranchised and dissatisfied with the BGAV that they felt the time was right and they wanted a new convention. They wanted a better time to relate to our national convention. A better way to partner and do missions and evangelism. And I think all those things put together suggested that the time was right. And the things that God has done since that time gave evidence that it was.
JEFF: Do you know anything about the process the group used for drafting the constitution?

TIM: No, I do not.

JEFF: O.K., Brother Doyle will be able to help me with that and brother T.C. I am going to see him tomorrow. Do you know how they organized the mission statement, the purpose statement? You know that you see on the website they have a purpose statement there, and of course they have core values. I will be asking how they determined those: foundation, fellowship, focus, future.

TIM: No, you will have to ask some of the people that were in on that, I was in that in the sense that I was there when they shared that.

JEFF: What do you think was significant for the SBCV to have such a strong doctrinal position they got that right up front. We believe the Bible is a verbally inspired word of God and sufficient. I am going to read all of it, and it’s only a infallible rule of faith and practice and then talk about the Baptist Faith and Message 2000. And they have come out with a very strong doctrinal statement. Why might you think that was significant for the SBCV?

TIM: I think that was the primary core value of the people that made up the SBCV. I think the drift they saw in the BGAV was a direct result of a lax theology and the direct result of a group of people who did not hold to the infallibility of the scripture. That’s the bottom line for many people and that is the foundation of our convention. Our national convention was built on a very narrow theology and a very narrow methodology and the same is true of our state convention.

JEFF: At some point in time, I’ll have to go back in the history and the records will show us how the SBCV got to the point how they did something call decentralize. Why was this important, and can you tell me anything about when they decentralized?

TIM: I was a part of that discussion and I am thankful that early on that someone caught that vision. And I think that was appreciated that was that they did not want to become a bureaucratic state convention. They wanted the ministry of our state convention to be out in the field and in the churches. And if it was a centralized state convention everything headquartered in Richmond like all the other state convention models, that would be much more difficult. So, it was a pioneer state convention model that God has blessed significantly and uniquely here in Virginia.

JEFF: What were some of the elements that make that up? Of course I know some things being a part of it but what were some of the things being on record that, how did they decentralize? What is the makeup for saying something is decentralized if that makes sense?
TIM: Well, it puts the majority of your staff in the field in the area where your churches are and so the fact that our state is divided up into regions 6 initially then 7 and now 5. And you have particular staff that has particular assignments in each region. Then they are in the field they are not having to travel back and forth to the field.

JEFF: So they live in those areas?

TIM: Yes, they live in those areas because they are putting their time, their energy and their resources directly into the areas that they serve. And so instead of having one person in charge of church planting who lives and works out of Richmond you’ve got 5 that are out in the field. Instead of 1 person who concentrates on church health, you’ve got 5 associates who are out in the field and so on and so forth. It gives you much broader coverage with the things that you are doing. It gives much more relational aspects that you are doing in the field, and it’s a much better model.

JEFF: So, if someone from a SBCV church called into here in the central office, I assume that they would be directed to someone in their area.

TIM: Yes, they would, and if they have a need you have somebody you can be talking with face to face that same day or the next day. Someone doesn’t have to work in their schedule driving out to meet you three weeks down the road as they are doing that everywhere else or you are having to drive in to meet them. So, it’s much more personable, much more relational and much more effective.

JEFF: I find that personally enriching because most of the times being in the SBCV when I call somebody, I only have the number to the person living in my area that I can call. It’s “When can we meet?” A pretty quick response, or ”What can I help you with? Do you need help in a particular area?” It’s been neat to see that aspect of it. When I first started a few people kind of strained at it a little bit you know they were so used to the old models you know. But it seems to have been a right move that has helped us for the churches in particular that are small churches, and it puts people right there that can help them.

TIM: Well it is! I have talked to people in leadership in other state conventions who would love to have that model but their convention has become so bureaucratic there is no way to accomplish that.

JEFF: That had to happen, I am just giving an opinion it seems it had to happen quick in the SBCV before you get so far down the road that the bureaucracy can happen.

TIM: Yes, it would be too cost inefficient for people to do that now.

JEFF: One of the big objectives and core values that the SBCV has is Church Planting, it has been a major focus. I remember when brother Geoff Hammond was here if he got up to speak every time he was going to say "Churches planting churches, planting churches."
Why does that become a real significant phase or push or move for the SBCV?

TIM: I think two reasons. Number one, that’s the New Testament model of churches building disciples, disciples making disciples, become church planting churches. I think that is the primary reason that is the New Testament model that is what churches ought to be doing reproducing themselves that is what Christians ought to be doing is reproducing themselves. The secondary reason is I think we realize in an area like we are where for years you had theological seminaries producing theological pastors who create theologically liberal churches. The only way we are going to have conservative churches on the Atlantic coast and this part of the United States is if we plant them and if we start them. There comes a point where in our convention many of our churches have come out of the BGAV there comes a point where you reach a saturation point and the only way your convention is going to grow is by reproducing churches. So that is why our convention is about planting churches because we believe churches that are committed to the truth and the inerrancy of the scripture are churches that reach people with the gospel. Those are the churches that have the heart to share the gospel and reproduce themselves and the kind of churches that we need not just in our state but all over the world. I think the time’s going to come very quickly when the focus of the SBCV is not just planting churches in Virginia, but planting churches in Virginia, North Carolina, Maryland, Delaware, and all over the nation and all over the world. I think that’s down the pike. It’s not being discussed but I think that’s what’s coming.

JEFF: Do you know of any statistical data or know how successful SBCV has been? Not all church plants survive, I haven’t looked at the data, do you have any idea of how things are going with that?

TIM: I haven’t looked at the data, I suspect that there is a greater ratio of surviving church plants in Virginia than anywhere else because we put so many resources into that and because that is a priority in our convention. I don’t think it is a priority in every convention. I think probably the statistics I am not sure but I think the statistics would show that probably for every four churches that exists in our convention there is at least one church plant. I doubt that there is any other state convention that has that same ratio.

JEFF: What are some of those resources that the SBCV does to make that successful?

TIM: The three main areas in our convention that we focus on are multiplying churches, maturing churches and mobilizing churches. In multiplying churches is the number one priority there. There is more staff involved in that area, there is more money involved in that area. We just don’t plant churches we fund the church plant and we pour state convention resources such as staff and materials and conferences into our church planters an into our church plants.

JEFF: Is there a certain length of time they do with a church plant?
TIM: I am sure there is a targeted length of time but I don’t know if there is anything written in stone but you would have to ask Doyle or Jeff.

JEFF: Things like if they need a sound system or set up help chairs. You know, I have seen the trailers before things that do that way, those kinds of resources. One of the things I would like to talk about and maybe your church has been involved in this and I am going to ask some of the other pastors is partnering with an established church. Can you talk about that that seems to be one of the resources that they are using?

TIM: Well, it is, our church co-sponsored a church plant and our church plant happens to be close to us in Blacksburg and that provides our church resources to that church if they need a team to come in and help them do Back Yard Bible Clubs, or surveying a community then we are more than willing to help them. If there is a special funding need that they would request we are more than willing and happy to help them. I am confident that in all of our church plants whatever needs that they have that are expressed those needs will be met by their sponsoring churches.

JEFF: Let me shift gears a little bit, something comes to mind about church plants. We have been a convention close to thirteen years. We did the big ten year gala, a number of years ago, what are some of the results that have happened within the last ten years that in your mind that these things stand out of how God has used SBCV?

TIM: Well, I think the number of churches that have come into our convention are obviously a sign of God’s blessing those were ten years of phenomenal growth the budget income that come in was off the charts that allowed us to set a great deal of money aside that would be poured back into church planting. The churches that have come into our convention have a heart to do evangelism and missions and if that is the heart of the churches than that is the heart of the conventions, that’s a blessing to the churches, and then that’s a blessing to the convention and so we have churches that are very much evangelistic churches, churches that are mission minded, that are putting mission teams all over the world. Churches that have the heart to multiply themselves and thus the church planting movement, the church planting blessing you have seen in our state. I think that that is the richest area of blessings that I have seen.

JEFF: Present time you are the president?

TIM: Correct.

JEFF: Ok, One of the things that I have heard about that I hear often, whether I hear it here in the office or hear it out in the field from other church members is that SBCV always tries to strive not that this comes back to the decentralization issue or try to strive that we are here to help you. We are not for you to pour into us, would you like to elaborate on that Tim?
TIM: I think that’s the trick of every state convention the saying is and the purpose is that the convention exists for the churches that’s not always the perception of the churches. A lot of times their perception is that the churches exist for the convention, and we pour our money into the convention and the convention does its own thing. I think the decentralization has helped accomplish that. It’s helped to be a greater field that the convention really does exist for the churches and the convention is here to help us accomplish the mission that God has given us. You know that is something that happens to be communicated over and over again and not just communicated but demonstrated. You know the proof’s in the pudding so it’s always going to be a priority need for our convention staff people those who represent our convention and leadership who continually communicate to our people our churches. We are here to help you accomplish the task that God has given you.

JEFF: Now, before coming to the convention have you served on other committees?

TIM: I have served on the Executive Board for a couple of terms. I have served on the board of The Baptist Banner.

JEFF: So you have been very active in that?

TIM: Yes.

JEFF: How much can you share about a dream about the future? What’s going on currently, actively and some of the dreams of the future?

TIM: Well, that’s part of the vision with our new director Dr. Jeff Ginn and one of his strengths is that he is a visionary leader and it’s in the early stages, but it is our attempt to look back at what’s been successful, what God has blessed. You look at what’s going on right now and look at what’s going on in our culture and try to seek God’s direction on how we can be more effective in the future and discovering what God’s vision is for the future of our convention. What we need to change, what we need to do better, what we need to keep doing and what we need to stop doing in order to reach people with the gospel, for the next ten to fifteen years.

JEFF: There is also a partnership with the Dakota’s that is fairly new, not sure if we came to them or they came to us. People have gone on prayer walks and basically they have come to us and said, "Hey, we need help!" Can you elaborate any on the Dakota partnership and what’s going on with that?

TIM: I am not sure how exactly the ins and outs of how that came into being. But I know our convention leadership is always looking for ways to reach their people not just their Jerusalem and Judea or their Samaria in the outer most parts of the earth and so they are always looking for opportunities for partnerships. We are getting ready to put on a staff member full-time that will coordinate the partnerships that will become very important to our leader partnership. I am not sure if that has been made public yet, but I guess you can
follow up with Dr. Ginn, but that is in the works. It is very important with the issue of mobilizing churches because that is an emphasis in our convention to help our churches be on mission with God to reach their Jerusalem, Judea or Samaria and uttermost parts of the earth. So, I am excited about that and it’s a growing area in my life and my church and thankful that our convention is doing that. And we will do partnerships with the Dakotas. We will do partnerships in other places in North America. We’ve got partnerships in South America developing. We have partnerships with Thailand, with Southern Cross that extends to New Zealand, Hong Kong, Singapore. And so we will be doing more and more of that as a convention just helping churches to accomplish the task that God has given them of reaching not just their neighbors but reaching their nations, reaching their nations with the Gospel.

JEFF: Is there any other stuff or concepts or ideas that you can think of that might be good that I need to know from your perspective before we close our interview today?

TIM: I don’t think so, I think you are covering the bases. You know talking to Doyle and T.C., Kelly and Carl and some of those guys that have been involved with the process from beginning to end will give you a really good handle of what’s going on and of course spending time with Dr. Ginn. If you haven’t done that yet and if you are going to do that, he is the visionary that God is using to help shape our convention for the next decade and God is doing a great work through him.

JEFF: Awesome Tim! Thank you so much for granting me the interview.

TIM: Anytime. You are welcome, and if you need to follow-up on anything let me know!
Interview with Dr. David Johnson
Conducted in a room at Rileyville Baptist Church, Rileyville, Virginia, July 15, 2009

JEFF: Brother David Johnson, is it all right with you that this interview is being recorded?

DAVID: Absolutely.

JEFF: I want to give you a chance to talk about, uh, even though you came in “78 –

DAVID: In ’78, yes.

JEFF: Tell me about what was going on nationally.

DAVID: Fundamentally, ’78 was the year, at least as far as I know, it was the year that Judge Paul Pressler and Paige Patterson got together, and it was the year that, you know that Dr., I’m having a senior moment. Oh, dear me, it will come to me in a minute, he passed away last year.

JEFF: Adrian Rogers.

DAVID: Adrian Rogers, it was the year the Adrian Rogers became President of the Convention. So that was the beginning of things, but I’ve got to be honest, at that stage I was not involved.

JEFF: Okay.

DAVID: I was just getting my feet on the ground, coming from England, and dealing with a different culture altogether.

JEFF: Oh, yeah, absolutely. Well, what led to the conservatives of Virginia, the SBCV establishing a fellowship?

DAVID: Well –

JEFF: Because that came in ’93, so by that time, I don’t know if you were involved.

DAVID: Yes, I was involved. I was involved I would say from 1980 onwards.

JEFF: Okay, well, fill in some of those gaps up to when the fellowship happened.

DAVID: Okay. When we started there was just a small group of us, and Art Ballard was the man that put it together, and we would meet occasionally for fellowship. We would
particularly meet at the BGAV annual meetings. We could have a time together and then they tried to promote the things that we felt needed promoting. We got absolutely nowhere to be frank with you. We got voted down on, I mean, year after year we put up a resolution regarding abortion and were defeated every year. So, these were the kind of things that really we were struggling with.

JEFF: So you would just throw out some of the, almost social issues that the Bible is clear about?

DAVID: Oh, yes, and we got voted down every time. I mean I know personally that, you know, I put a resolution on the floor regarding abortion. I know that Paige Bowman, from Ramoth, put a, I mean, Paige was over at Woodstock then, but he put a resolution then, but he put a resolution on the floor regarding abortion. And a number of men, a guy we don’t hear much about these days is Hudson Nuckolls, from Shenandoah. Hudson fought against abortion long before we woke up to the real issues. So there was a small group of us that were battling with this kind of thing. So I guess the fellowship developed.

JEFF: So those were some of the key issues that were the driving force, you know, not only more than just abortion, but there were things that must have been happening in leadership.

DAVID: Homosexuality, the main issue for all us was the word of God, you know, that the word of God was infallible.

JEFF: The inerrancy of scripture.

DAVID: Yes, that’s right. That was the main issue for all of us to be honest with you.

JEFF: Hallelujah.

DAVID: That was the fight we had. And that was, you know, again to quote Paul Pressler, that was the, "hill on which to die." God raised up T.C., and T.C. fundamentally became our leader. He really did. I mean, liberals painted him as a little man with red horns and pitchfork, you know.

JEFF: I didn’t know that.

DAVID: Literally, I mean, as far as liberals were concerned he was the devil incarnated, you know, because he, and bless him, he always instilled in the worse, you know, be gentlemanly, you know, you can be right, but you can be wrong by –

JEFF: Your actions.
DAVID: Your actions and your attitude. So T.C. always encouraged this in spite of what they said about him. For me T.C. has always been a Christian gentleman. In all of his dealings, I mean, he’s firm, he’s strong. I don’t think I’ve ever had him be malicious.

JEFF: Yes.

DAVID: I guess that would be the word I wouldn’t use. So we gradually began to build. We met in Roanoke a number of times at the airport there, and you know.

JEFF: What would you do, you would meet during, right before the annual meeting or what?

DAVID: Yes, we were also beginning to realize that we needed to organize. So, there would be a group of us who met at Roanoke and talked about the situation. I guess we felt a little bit like the signers of the Declaration, you know, the Declaration of Independence.

JEFF: Huh-huh.

DAVID: Because even then we were recognizing that we couldn’t carry on with BGAV with the direction it was going, with its liberal position. I won’t even use the word leaning, because it wasn’t a leaning, it was a position. You know, the Religious Herald I would say had been at times wrong about Corporate Baptist Fellowship than it ever had about SBC as a convention. So fundamentally the leaders of BGAV, you know, Julian Pentecost, the editor of the Herald and so forth, these men were absolutely entrenched in where they stood. Again, this was a personal experience. We were down at Williamsburg for the BGAV annual meeting and they had just voted on the new President. I think it was Raymond Spence, if I remember rightly. And we happened to be in a restaurant, and it was on this restaurant that had booths, you know, and we were in the restaurant and they were in the next booth to us, and one of them said to Raymond Spence, “Well are you going to give the conservatives anything?” And his response was, “I’m not giving them anything.” So we pretty well knew then that we were in a battle.

JEFF: Wow.

DAVID: I remember that Bill Templeton, now he’s a man that you might want to talk to as well. I think Bill was our first President of the fellowship.

JEFF: And I’m, yes there he is, I got him right here, okay. Brother T.C. gave me his name.

DAVID: Yeah, Bill I believe was probably our first President. I’m not absolutely sure of that but I think he was.

JEFF: Let me look and see if he’s on this other list also.
DAVID: And it may be that Bill was involved in leading before we ever officially formed.

JEFF: Northside Baptist Church.

DAVID: That’s right; he’s not at Northside anymore.

JEFF: Okay.

DAVID: And –

JEFF: SBCV will help me find him.

DAVID: Yes. I got his telephone number and stuff on my rolodex at home.

JEFF: Great.

DAVID: Jeff, so we can pull it and get that.

JEFF: That would be really good. One thing that T.C. was sharing with me too, you know, and you can elaborate on it, he realized that the voice for Virginia was the *Religious Herald*.

DAVID: Oh, absolutely.

JEFF: So they were using that.

DAVID: That was the *Banner* to some degree.

JEFF: We didn’t have internet then, we didn’t have, and right, then so he came up with the *Banner* in ’88 and that was a way of getting the conservative message out and nationally.

DAVID: See, when we eventually formed we decided we were doing a Bible conference, a small one, but our first major Bible Conference was at Roanoke. T.C., he probably didn’t tell you this, but he underwrote it financially. I got the job as Secretary/Treasurer for the Bible Conference, and I held that job for ten years, until we disbanded the Bible Conference, and we made it all one unit once we became a convention. But I was Secretary/Treasurer for the whole ten years of the Bible Conference existence. And our first speaker, keynote speaker, was Adrian Rogers.

JEFF: Wow.

DAVID: And Adrian came to us just for expenses. He wouldn’t take a dime because he was with us on where, what we were trying to do, and where we were trying to go.
JEFF: Do you remember what year that was?

DAVID: Wow.

JEFF: Was it ten years before, the convention was voted in ’96, so was it in ’86?

DAVID: ’86, ’87.

JEFF: Okay, so it was somewhere in there.

DAVID: That about, yes.

JEFF: Okay.

DAVID: It took us a couple of years before we had the funds to reimburse T.C., and we never reimbursed him with money. We bought him a new computer for the Banner.

JEFF: A powerful instrument.

DAVID: So that’s how we endeavored to reimburse him for underwriting our first Bible conference and, you know, Adrian was our keynote speaker.

JEFF: Wow.

DAVID: And I’ve got to be honest, Adrian is one of my heroes as far as I’m concerned. You know we’ve lost some good men the last two years.

JEFF: Yes, yes. My wife and I have been contemplating and thinking through that, men that just stood up, were not afraid to stand up even when it came to what’s going on nationally in the political scene.

DAVID: And the neat thing was, you know, small churches like Rileyville, you know, we were involved. No one looked down their nose at us because we were small. I mean, we grew, praise God.

JEFF: Yes.

DAVID: But, you know, here was I the pastor of a small country church. I was given the opportunity to preach at the Bible conference on the same platform as Dr. Rogers. I mean, you talk about being nervous.

JEFF: Yes.

DAVID: But it was one neat opportunity, and you know, I feel blessed this morning just for being involved. Somebody said this in one of our meetings; in fact, I think it was
T.C.’s pastor said if BGAV knew we were doing this, you know, they would roast us in the *Herald*.

JEFF: I’m sure they would have.

DAVID: You know you might want to think about someone like Hudson Nuckolls who at BGAV brought us the question of abortion and he was ruled out of order. I beg your pardon, let me go back. He brought the issue up at the national convention and he was ruled out of order.

JEFF: Nationally?

DAVID: Yes. I’m not sure if it was the way he did it, or the way he approached it.

JEFF: His name is Hudson?

DAVID: Hudson Nuckolls.

JEFF: With an “H”?

DAVID: Yes, H-U-D-S-O-N, N-U-C-K-O-L-S, and he’s been at Shenandoah forever. I mean I was at Rileyville for 27 years; Hudson’s been there 30 odd years.

JEFF: So he’s still at –

DAVID: As far as I know, yes.

JEFF: Which church is that again?

DAVID: Shenandoah Baptist Church.

JEFF: Shenandoah?

DAVID: The town of Shenandoah. But he brought the same motion to the Virginia convention and he was ruled out of order again. By the headlines and the *Religious Herald* were, “Ruled out of order again.” So these were the issues, Jeff.

JEFF: Wow.

DAVID: And these were the things; I’ll never forget nominating Howard for the Presidency of BGAV. Talk about a hard experience. I nominated him, and I had to leave and go into the bathroom and throw up. It was such a, you know, it was –

JEFF: Brother Howard told me, he said we knew none of us were going to get it, but we had to keep trying.
DAVID: That’s right, that’s where we were. That’s where we were.

JEFF: We were all going to be the sacrificial lamb for that year.

DAVID: Yes.

JEFF: Okay, just fill me in.

DAVID: You know, friends of mine were told in Virginia have nothing to do with David Johnson. He’s a radical.

JEFF: I know.

DAVID: You know, okay, I’m a radical. If I’m going to die for something, I’m going to die for something that’s worth dying for.

JEFF: Yes.

DAVID: You know a liberal won’t die for his faith. A conservative will die, because it’s going from belief to conviction.

JEFF: That’s right.

DAVID: And we will die for convictions.

JEFF: Absolutely, absolutely. Well, how did the fellowship get birth? How did that come alive?

DAVID: Well, fundamentally it got birthed because we realized there was a hunger amongst the pastors for the word of God.

JEFF: So here I’ve got the date in January 28th, 1993 at Old Forest Road Baptist in Lynchburg.

DAVID: By the way that is where Art Ballard was pastor originally.

JEFF: Okay.

DAVID: So you might want to know that. He was at Old Forest Road, you know, that’s where the roots of our movement started really, at Old Forest Road. So even before this, we’re going back ten years before this. There’s probably more, Jeff, when Al Ballard was instrumental in forming us, in getting a group of men together of like-minds and like hearts, so.

JEFF: And, so what was that like? So take me up to that point, were you there when they
voted to be a fellowship?

DAVID: Yes, yes, I mean absolutely.

JEFF: What kind of crowd did you have, what kind of atmosphere?

DAVID: It was a good crowd. I mean; we were pretty full at Old Forest Road, back then when we voted to become a fellowship again.

JEFF: Did BGAV afterwards know you did that and what was their reaction?

DAVID: Oh, yes, it was reported in the *Herald*.

JEFF: Okay. I’m sure in my research I’ll see all that.

DAVID: I have a feeling that Robert Dillday was the one who reported it. I think Pentecost had retired by then. I think Robert Dillday was the man that reported on becoming a fellowship. You might want to verify that, Jeff, that’s just –

JEFF: I will.

DAVID: Just a recollection. I think Dillday was the one that reported that.

JEFF: I have all of those names listed here somewhere.

DAVID: Yes. So fundamentally it was a growing conviction amongst us. So we started the Bible conference.

JEFF: So this would be something you could come to before the annual meeting?

DAVID: Yes. When BGAV had their pastor’s conference, we had our Bible conference.

JEFF: Okay.

DAVID: We ran parallel. Interestingly we outnumbered them tremendously at the Bible conference. Because men who came knew we were getting some of the top speakers in the Southern Baptist Convention to come and speak for us. Men like Paige Patterson, Dr. Rogers, men like Sam Cathy, Junior Hill, you know, some of the top men in the convention we had coming to speak for us. Has anyone told you of Dr. Chapman’s help?

JEFF: Somebody may have mentioned it.

DAVID: Wallace Chapman when we started to negotiate with the State, I mean the National, beg your pardon, the National Convention, Wallace Chapman got behind us. JEFF: What was he over, what was he part of at the time?
DAVID: He was Secretary of the SBC.

JEFF: Okay, because I know who that is.

DAVID: Yes, he was Secretary of the SBC, and so he got behind us, and, I wouldn’t use the word pressure, but certainly used his influence to give us at least a hearing. Initial reaction to us was it’s never been done before.

JEFF: Right.

DAVID: You know we’ve never had a state with two conventions. And the committee, if I remember, I think Kelly Burris was the chairman of the committee, either him or Bob Jackson. Again, my memory is a little fuzzy there. But you know what they endeavored to do was to give each one of us one of the boards to contact and talk to. So D.B. Martin, has anyone mentioned D.B. to you?

JEFF: Yes, he was very instrumental in the constitution and bylaws.

DAVID: But also he was on this committee that negotiated with the National Convention.

JEFF: Okay.

DAVID: Kelly was on it, I was on it, D.B. was on it, Bob Jackson was on it. I’m trying to think who else, Jeff.

JEFF: So, this leads into that next question I was going to ask you, which is exactly what you’ve already answered, was, in your mind who were some of those key figures, you know, in the years of the fellowship, still you were not intending to be a state convention. You were hoping to take over.

DAVID: Well, our intention, our intention was to try to get BGAV back to the book, by the ballot box.

JEFF: Yes. So tell me how that happened. T.C. shared with me about, I mean the brain child behind this of getting messengers.

DAVID: Well, you see, we at that time, we were allowed messengers on what we give to Southern Baptist causes.

JEFF: Sorry, okay

DAVID: So Rileyville for instance had 15 messengers, the maximum. So BGAV changed that.

JEFF: Now, how did they change it?
DAVID: What they said was that our messengers to our state convention was going to be based on what we gave to Virginia, not what we gave to the Southern Baptist Convention, but what we gave to Virginia. So, Rileyville’s messenger count went down from fifteen to two, along with Spotswood Baptist, along with the other conservative churches.

JEFF: Right.

DAVID: We were, our messengers went down drastically because most of us were not giving to Virginia. I did not want our mission dollars, for instance, to go to the hospital in Lynchburg, because they practiced abortion.

JEFF: Wow.

DAVID: Okay, I’m a radical. But I did not want –

JEFF: Or CBF?

DAVID: That’s right. Our mission dollars to go to the Religious Herald.

JEFF: Or the Richmond –

DAVID: Times.

JEFF: The Richmond Seminary.

DAVID: You know these were the things. So we negatively designated so almost every mission dollar went to the SBC. So we –

JEFF: So, sounds like that had to do with a constitutional change?

DAVID: So, we lost. We lost our power at the ballot box by that change.

JEFF: And that got voted through apparently?

DAVID: Oh, yes, it did. That’s when we felt the need to become a separate convention because we realized then we were not going to bring BGAV back to The Book. We were not going to do, or be able to do what had happened in the National Convention. Now, I’ve got to be honest, I would have done it that year, and Tommy Taylor, along with a couple of others advised holding back. They were right I was wrong. A year later we went ahead and did it.

JEFF: See I’ve not yet looked at the—when that took place but it sounds like from the people I’ve been interviewing that that took place in the BGA annual meeting in ’95?
DAVID: Yes.

JEFF: Because we voted in ’96 over at Grove Avenue, September 16th to become a state convention.

DAVID: That’s right we did, a state convention.

JEFF: Well, let me ask you this then.

DAVID: The interesting thing is that this man Bob Jackson who’s now with BGAV, stayed with BGAV, was like me. He wanted to move then. Bob Jackson can tell you himself why, he told me straight, person to person. David we are not going to change the BGAV. And I’ve racked my brains as to why Bob went with BGAV. I think I know, the man was hurt.

JEFF: Yes.

DAVID: I understand it but I’m sorry he felt the need to do that.

JEFF: Yes, yes.

DAVID: I really believe that if Bob had stayed there would have been a nitch for him, you know, within SBC.

JEFF: That’s right, within the organization.

DAVID: Yes, I really believe it because he was a capable man.

JEFF: Because look at it now, I mean, you know, we needed men like that.

DAVID: Well, you know, our first budget if I remember rightly again this is just from, we sat in Virginia Beach in a restaurant and Doyle took a napkin.

JEFF: A napkin, I remember this, yes.

DAVID: You know, and our first budget was $75,000.00, Jeff.

JEFF: And I have the actual budget in here from Brother Howard Baldwin.

DAVID: Okay.

JEFF: So I have the actual first year budget.

DAVID: And I mean this last year 10.2 million.
JEFF: Yes.

DAVID: You know God has blessed us.

JEFF: You need to save that for later because that’s part of the final closing stuff. Well, what, and before we even get to voting as a convention and you’ve already hit on some of those, what were a couple of the keys things that held you guys together? Well, I mean the women who were involved too, conservative pastors and their churches, what held you together?

DAVID: Well fundamentally, we were all desperate for fellowship. We were all desperate to find someone of like-mind. Now, that’s not saying we always agreed, we didn’t, but I can honestly say I don’t think anybody ever left any of our meetings feeling that they had been slighted or pushed aside, or not given the opportunity to voice their, I mean, to be honest with you, Jeff, the BGAV meetings for me were always a battle. I would go in with my stomach in knot because I knew we were going to get into it. I loved SBCV meetings, and we don’t always agree. I mean, I don’t agree with T.C. on home schooling to be honest with you.

JEFF: Right.

DAVID: I mean I believe in home schooling but I don’t think everybody is qualified to home school.

JEFF: Right.

DAVID: Or are they able to home school, so T.C. and I disagree on that, but we are the best of friends, Jeff.

JEFF: Yes.

DAVID: You know that’s where we are, like Paul or Barnabas, we agree to disagree at times.

JEFF: Well that has nothing to do with salvation or the –

DAVID: That’s right, or fellowship. The fundamentals –

JEFF: Yes.

DAVID: So for me SBCV became a place that was my spiritual home as a pastor. And I guess most of us felt that at long last we have a spiritual home. In BGAV we did not have a spiritual home.

JEFF: Uh.
DAVID: You know for me, Jeff, when I go home one of the first things I do is kick my shoes off and walk around in my socks.

JEFF: Me too.

DAVID: If I came to visit with you I wouldn’t do that because I’m a visitor.

JEFF: Or I might ask you to.

DAVID: But you know what I’m saying?

JEFF: Yes, yes, that’s right.

DAVID: I felt the same spiritually.

JEFF: With SBCV.

DAVID: With SBCV.

JEFF: Wow.

DAVID: I could take my shoes off and be myself.

JEFF: That’s neat.

DAVID: You know, I guess I hope that answers your question.

JEFF: Absolutely, it really does. It makes it very personal which is what I’ve been after with the same question that I ask everybody else. Was there anything that was going on because I came down in ’95.

DAVID: Okay.

JEFF: Okay, so I was here when we voted to be a convention. The only convention I’ve ever known is SBCV.

DAVID: Yes.

JEFF: So I don’t know how all the other ones operate. You know, I’ve had to move the church I went to SBCV so I had to get into the middle of some it and what the differences were. Was there any, within the leadership, was there any talks with the BGAV leadership to try to prevent what was getting close?
DAVID: We did attempt, there was a couple of meetings that didn’t go very well, and it wasn’t always BGAV’s fault, and I need to be careful, but you know we had one brother that was –

JEFF: Cantankerous.

DAVID: Cantankerous, is a good word, you know, and Reggie McDonald he didn’t want to have anything to do with this guy because of his, he felt he couldn’t talk to him. So, yeah, there were meetings.

JEFF: Okay.

DAVID: But we always knew we weren’t going to get anywhere.

JEFF: Okay.

DAVID: I mean to be honest looking at BGAV Reggie McDonald was probably the best they were going to get as far as we were concerned as conservatives.

JEFF: Yes.

DAVID: You know.

JEFF: Now who’s Reggie McDonald?

DAVID: He was, he was the, he had John Upton’s job.

JEFF: Oh, okay.

DAVID: Yes.

JEFF: So he was the Executive Director at one time?

DAVID: That’s right, yes, of BGAV, nice guy, but no conservative.

JEFF: Right.

DAVID: You know we knew we weren’t going to –

JEFF: Okay. So think about 1996 because it took place in September, voting to be a convention.

DAVID: Yes.
JEFF: What were the circumstances that finally led everybody to say, "Now is the time?" If you remember because some people were nervous.

DAVID: Yes, fundamentally it was the culmination of the change in the rules for messengers. We at last came to conclusion that we could not do it, and if we were going to do anything as Southern Baptist in Virginia, Conservative Southern Baptist, then we were going to have to form our own convention.

JEFF: Because it sounds like from what happened that, not only did it kill the voice, but it killed the opportunity, I mean, to do anything at the convention.

DAVID: We were done, I mean, to be perfectly honest if we hadn’t formed I think conservatives would have stopped going to meetings. I certainly would have been disinclined to go.

JEFF: Well, Brother T.C. was sharing with me, and he said when he was getting around you guys to get all your messengers to come and even the messengers were getting discouraged because they would come to these and it was just always a fight.

DAVID: Now, Rileyville has both deacons and elders.

JEFF: Okay.

DAVID: One of my elders is with the Lord now, godly man, you know, we took, I don’t know if we always took our maximum but close to it, and we went and Daniel said to me on the way back, “Pastor David, don’t ask me to come next year.” He said, “I am grieved in my spirit for what went on there.” And it was the abortion issue, it was the homosexual issue, you know, things that clearly –

JEFF: Clearly in the word of God.

DAVID: People who stood on the word of God it was grieving for them, Jeff. So I guess when Dan said to me don’t ask me to come next year I knew we were going to have to do something, or come out altogether. And praise God.

JEFF: So how was the decision reached because surely it wasn’t just one person, when the group said, “When we go to Grove in September, it’s time to vote?”

DAVID: Yes, absolutely. We continued to meet; we continued to have fellowships through the year.

JEFF: Was this kind of formulated through the Executive Committee that had been formed for the fellowship. Like you would kind of decide . . .
DAVID: Yes, we had an Executive Committee which I sat on, and you know, so gradually it was, we came to a meeting of the minds.

JEFF: Yes.

DAVID: That felt we can’t go on like this, we’ve got to do something. As you know the family group was, my recollection was 11, they tell me 13, but my recollection is 11, do you know the first church that committed itself.

JEFF: Yes.

DAVID: Ebenezer Baptist Church.

JEFF: I know the first church that was uniquely aligned. I’ve got it written down here somewhere.

DAVID: Ebenezer from Bluster was the first church to commit.

JEFF: To the SBCV?

DAVID: To the formation, as a church.

JEFF: Okay, Chatmoss was the first to be uniquely aligned, and that’s good to know because now that you’ve put it there I’ll have it on record.

DAVID: Yes, Ebenezer.

JEFF: Okay.

DAVID: Check with Doyle on that one, but I’m sure I’m right on that, Jeff.

JEFF: I will. T.C. told me Chatmoss was the first to be uniquely aligned, but that doesn’t mean, yeah, because individuals were coming in, too.

DAVID: If I remember rightly Ebenezer was the first church to commit in writing. Let me put it that way. I think theirs’ was the first letter that Doyle, it might have been Howard, but the first letter if I remember rightly, and I’m pretty sure I’m right on this, it was Ebenezer Baptist.

JEFF: I think probably the records would show that, too.

DAVID: Yes.

JEFF: When I get down to the office and look up the different records that way.
DAVID: Yes.

JEFF: Well, how did it get communicated to the people to know we’re going to meet in Richmond September, was that the Banner, was the main way of communicating around the—

DAVID: Yeah, I don’t think we publicized the fact that we were going to, I think it was more that we come to a meeting of the minds and it was shared amongst the pastors. I mean, remember Jeff, we weren’t a big group.

JEFF: Right.

DAVID: Whether it was 11 or whether 13 churches that give you an idea of where we were in those days.

JEFF: Yes.

DAVID: You know they talk about the "telephone booth." And to be frank with you going back to Art Ballard’s days it was a "telephone booth." I mean there were very few of us. So it wasn’t as if we had a massive number of people to communicate with. You know, we were all friends.

JEFF: Yes, wow.

DAVID: So it wasn’t a big group in that sense. But when we came to it, you know it was, that’s where we needed to be and we realized that’s where we needed to be. You know Bob Jackson after he left said that SBCV would not do anything, we would be located around the Richmond area, we weren’t going to grow.

JEFF: I bet he’s had to eat his words.

DAVID: Oh, yes, and from what I’m hearing, you know, Bob regrets, you know, not going with us.

JEFF: So you don’t even know if he still lives in Virginia, David?

DAVID: Oh, yes, he’s still involved with BGAV, sure.

JEFF: Okay. Still definitely is. I’m going to switch to questions dealing with Constitution and stuff like that, and if there are things that you don’t know Brother just tell me. What kind of process did the group use in drafting the Constitution? I do know that Brother D.B. Martin—

DAVID: He’s the man to talk to.
JEFF: Okay, they told me that he would be the one.

DAVID: And D.B., and Jess Jackson, too.

JEFF: Okay. It’s Jess down here.

DAVID: I would say of our leadership in those days they were the two men that really had grasp on that side of things. You know when, I am not of the political band at all, Jeff. You know, I’ll never forget I was asked if I would let my name go forward for the presidency and the first one to ask me was John Marks.

JEFF: Dealing with SBCV.

DAVID: Yes, and I said, "No John, that’s not me. You count me out." Then Howard approached me, and I said now Howard I just told John no, so I’m going to say the same to you Howard, and then T.C. approached me, and thought well, Lord, are you telling me something. So I said to T.C. "Okay T.C. you can nominate me, but I said if somebody else is put up, you know, I’ll be glad to step down." Anyway, when it came to it, Tim Piland was nominated and you know Tim got it. It was close, and Tim got it, and T.C. came and apologized, and I said T.C. you know what I said when they announced the results, I said to my wife, “Praise God.” Because I’m not, I’m not, I mean, I did all I could Chairman of the Executive Board for two years, enjoyed it, but I’m not a political band. You know, if you want me to speak on Theology, sure.

JEFF: Right and preach the word.

DAVID: Yes, but I’m not a political creature at all. I was not looking for office at all, but I have been thrilled to be involved in what’s happened.

JEFF: It’s incredible. Were you there when they, I know they probably tweaked it some when they drafted the purpose statement.

DAVID: Yes, yes.

JEFF: Yes, it says, “The Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia is a fellowship of Southern Baptist Convention Churches cooperating to assist local congregations in their task of fulfilling.”

DAVID: See, Kelly Burris was the motivating force at that stage.

JEFF: Okay. I see him next Tuesday.

DAVID: Kelly was, bless him, you know, a man uniquely equipped to do that.
JEFF: Well, let me ask, go back, I need to write on this, let me go back, backtrack. How did they come up with the name Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, and then was there any—

DAVID: Well, we wanted to keep the initials SBC, because of the Southern Baptist Convention. So we batted it around, Howard was opposed to the name, I don’t know whether he told you that, but Howard was initially opposed to the name.

JEFF: He did tell me.

DAVID: Yes, but you know what it became what we felt was the right thing because it stated who we were. We were the conservative wing of the Southern Baptist Convention in Virginia. So that’s really why we came with it. We knocked it about, we chewed it about, but we felt it was saying and stating who we were. Not only who we were but what we believed. So that was the crux of us coming with the title.

JEFF: Yes, Brother Howard told me, he said I’m not ashamed to say that originally when we had the interview, and we talked privately even after, before and after the interview on all the different days. And he said originally I was afraid, he said I’m not afraid of the name of conservatives that’s going to scare off some people, but he said you know it’s interesting in all the publications now all you see is SBC of Virginia, so unless you know it stands for conservative it looks like it’s the national convention.

DAVID: Yes, yes.

JEFF: He said so God obviously had a purpose in us doing what we did.

DAVID: But that’s why we did it. You know, it stated who we were and it stated what we believed.

JEFF: Some of these things I’m going to deal with the core value and things of that nature. You know, the core values are right there on the website.

DAVID: Yes.

JEFF: It talks about foundation, fellowship, focus, function, future, how did they get developed?

DAVID: Again, the committee, and I worked on it with Kelly, but Kelly was the man that put that together.

JEFF: Can I interject from some others, and it may help jog your memory. Somebody told me at one point in time before Geoff Hammond even came on that you hired him like as a consultant and he helped with a bunch of this, too.
DAVID: Now, again, Geoff, I don’t remember that.

JEFF: And I won’t know either until I ask him

DAVID: But again Geoff Hammond and I were good friends because of us both being Brits you know.

JEFF: Yes. He teases me about my name.

DAVID: Yes.

JEFF: And then they’ve got the objective strength and support, start, send, which they’re even focusing on now and all those tie back to churches. One of the things that I do want to ask and you’ve already addressed this, and I won’t even read it, but the question is why was it significant for the SBCV have such a strong doctrine position? I’m going to read the first part, “We believe that the Bible is the verbally inspired word of God, and is sufficient as our only infallible rule of faith and practice.” Then they added the Baptist Faith and Message in 2000.

DAVID: Yes, that’s right.

JEFF: When that came out later. Why did they take such a strong stand on the word of God?

DAVID: Fundamentally, we had watched and seen what had happened in the National Convention that is was a gradual just like Spurgeon said of England, you know, the downgrade controversy, we saw the National Convention go on a downgrade. Because the conservatives fundamentally plowed their own furrows and we let the liberals rule the conventions. We really did, and so we felt when we were putting things together we really needed a statement that any church that was going to be a part of us would have to recognize where we stood. So it was fundamentally to make sure that churches believed what we believed. You know it wasn’t a rubber stamp process and that’s what we wanted to avoid. We wanted the churches to be a part of us because they had the conviction that we had. And one of my fears, Jeff, is that if we’re not very careful we may lose our impetus.

JEFF: Right.

DAVID: People who have no time for us, again he got himself into trouble, but the guy that was, that had the job before Geoff Hammond, you know, North American Mission Board, he was at First Baptist Norfolk, I’m trying to think of his name, anyway.

JEFF: Not John Powers?

DAVID: No, no, no.
JEFF: Kenny Gooch?

DAVID: No, not Kenny Gooch. He was chairman of North American Mission Board, President of North American Mission Board before Geoff Hammond, got himself –

JEFF: Oh, yes, yes, okay. I know who you’re talking about.

DAVID: He was pastor of First Baptist.

JEFF: That’s right.

DAVID: Bill Templeton wrote to him and asked him to come and be one of our keynote speakers, and his reaction was very negative. You know, you’re just a bunch of...fundamentally he wrote back to Bill and said you’re just a bunch of radicals, and I want nothing to do with you. It was interesting when we got established, well established, and he came back as President of North American Mission Board and spoke to us, I mean, he was glowing, but some of us –

JEFF: Remembered.

DAVID: Remembered. Now, you know, that was –

JEFF: Bob.

DAVID: That’s it, Bob, anyway –

JEFF: Yes.

DAVID: Anyway, you know, he had rejected us and those remember like that. There were men who sat on the fence for years. Men I loved and respected, but they never came up. I mean, to talk to them they were with us.

JEFF: Yes, yes.

DAVID: But they never took the step of being a part. Charlie Fuller is an illustration. Van Duone is another.

JEFF: Bob Record.

DAVID: That’s it, Bob Record.
JEFF: I knew it would come to me.

DAVID: He rejected us completely out of hand in the early days.

JEFF: Right.

DAVID: When we were just trying to get off the ground.

JEFF: Some people were scared to death, I guess.

DAVID: Yes.

JEFF: But men like you guys were like we got to be true to the word regardless.

DAVID: And so to some degree, Jeff, I’m a little afraid, and this is why we put the Constitution and the statement together, to try to protect ourselves from people being a part of us out of convenience. Do you understand what I’m saying?

JEFF: Absolutely, and I have to ask the question based on interview and my research, but I’m glad it’s such a strong statement. I want to go on record myself. I ask it kind of nonchalantly but I’m so glad it’s a strong statement.

DAVID: But it was to protect us from convenience. People becoming a part of us out of convenience, you know right now it’s convenient to be part of SBCV for some people.

JEFF: Right.

DAVID: I don’t want them on board with us if they’ve come on board out of convenience.

JEFF: Right.

DAVID: The people for me, and again this is the radical, I want people to be a part of us out of conviction, Jeff.

JEFF: Sure.

DAVID: You know my ideas of being active are pretty well over. You know, next month I’ll be 69, but if I thought our convention was going to go the way the BGAV have gone I’d be spitting fire right now.

JEFF: That’s good. How did they decide, and I almost forgot to mention it during our conversation. How did people decide on the 50/50 giving plan for SBVC? That’s wonderful.
DAVID: Jeff, that was our motivation from the beginning. That was our goal, that was our target. You see we had fought in BGMV, you know, that free track mission group?

JEFF: Oh, yes.

DAVID: We had fought it in years gone by on the floor. This is what I was saying to you, when we went to the BGAV meeting we knew we were going to have a fight. You see, we believe that the Cooperative Program is the glue for the Southern Baptist Convention. And so, and that was the conviction of most of the, if not all of the conservatives. It was certainly the conviction of the founding group. That we really felt our support must go to the Cooperative Program. So, that was our intent from the beginning.

JEFF: A lot of the conventions did start out that way where it was a 50/50 split between the state and national convention.

DAVID: Yes!

JEFF: It’s been amazing to see, I think our God has blessed that.

DAVID: Jeff, that’s my conviction, God has honored it. You know, God has honored it. And, you know, we said we wanted to keep our machine lean and mean. You know, we didn’t want what BGAV had, big bullies in the middle of Richmond, limos parked outside.

JEFF: Bureaucracy gone amuck.

DAVID: You know, mission dollars ought to go to missions.

JEFF: Yes, yes.

DAVID: And that’s been our conviction along with we want the SBCV to grow but not at the expense of BGAV. I mean if that happens along the way because churches, see generally speaking most churches theologically are where we are, Jeff. It’s their pastors that are not.

JEFF: That comes back to part of what we were talking about in the beginning, what others have talked about, that the schools are so liberal that they were cranking out liberal pastors and then Brother Paige Patterson and others realized that the way you deal with that is through a President at the National Convention and the Trustee Boards.

DAVID: And you know it took us ten years to get the trustees. Jeff, the reason I stepped out of the Shenandoah Baptist Association it was our Christmas, our pastor’s Christmas dinner and in conversation that morning the virgin birth came up. We had four pastors in that meeting deny the virgin birth.
JEFF: I would have left right away.

DAVID: Well, Jeff, there were 23 pastors present. I stood up, smoke coming out of both ears, you know, and I challenged them. Out of 23 pastors a retired pastor, John Abbott, stood with me a youth pastor from First Baptist Martinsburg stood with me. We were the only three. At the end of the meeting a pastor came to me and said, “Dave I really appreciated what you said there this morning.” And I said to him, “If you appreciate,” and I won’t quote his name, and I said to him, “If you appreciated what I said this morning you would have stood with me. Don’t come to me now.” I was upset, I’ve got to be honest, Jeff. Don’t come to me now it’s too late. You had your opportunity in there to nail your colors to the Master but you didn’t take it.

JEFF: Yes, yes.

DAVID: And this is one of my fears of guys like this that will come on board with SBCV because it’s convenient for them.

JEFF: Yes.

DAVID: Now, one of them that denied the virgin birth publicly was one of his deacons who started to attend our services on Sunday night because their church didn’t have a Sunday evening service. And it came out in conversation and he went and faced his pastor and his pastor denied he said it. So I said, “Well, I’ll come and meet with him.” And I said, “I’ll bring other pastors and not men who feel like I do, but men who feel like he feels who at least got the courage of their convictions.” And afterwards the deacon came to me and he said, “Well, he is, he has admitted it.” He said but he told me that he didn’t, he didn’t allow it to be public because his church wouldn’t, you see the people in the pew.

JEFF: Right.

DAVID: And that’s why I’m a little afraid, and that’s why I’m glad we got the statement.

JEFF: I’m going back to where we were. Yeah, that’s right, that’s right. Let me go on to a, you know, finding out that this concept was even in the beginning in the birth of SBCV they, they after several years they did something called decentralization.

DAVID: Yes.

JEFF: Okay, well, it was after it was decentralized from the beginning.

DAVID: Yes.

JEFF: But they, I remember when that was –
DAVID: Geoff Hammond was instrumental in accelerating that.

JEFF: Okay. Tell me about that concept and why they felt that was real important.

DAVID: Well, again let’s be honest we learned from the mistakes of BGAV. You know, everything was in Richmond.

JEFF: And you had Associations throughout the state.

DAVID: Yes, and DUN’s who had a massive amount of power, influence, not so much in congregations, Jeff, but on pastors. You know, like one guy said to me, what are you going to do when you need another church? I said the same as I did when I wanted this one. What’s that? Pray. You know, so a lot of guys were influence by the central office as it were. Just to use the phrase. So we didn’t want that, Jeff.

JEFF: Yes, yes.

DAVID: We wanted men to feel that they had people with them that understood where they were. So that was really our motive so the churches didn’t fail, the office didn’t understand what they were going through or what they were fighting with. So we wanted men out there that could identify with, and praise God it’s worked.

JEFF: Yes, yes.

DAVID: You know it really has worked.

JEFF: Yes, you don’t have to go to Glenn Allen to get help.

DAVID: You know if I need help, I’ll pick up the phone and call Donald.

JEFF: Yes, yes.

DAVID: You know, Donald Webb.

JEFF: Right.

DAVID: You know I was instrumental in Donald coming on board. I nominated him. I preached revival down there and Donald impressed me, so as it happened I was President of the Nominating Committee for SBCV the following year so I nominated Donald.

JEFF: Right.

DAVID: He, then he got involved and he felt God was leading him to become part of the staff and it’s good because he’s come out of the situation that the other guys are in.
JEFF: Yes, and a bunch of the guys serve in areas where they were former pastors.

DAVID: That’s right. And Jeff, that’s what we wanted, men who understood, not prima donnas. You know after our infamous pastor's conference our DUN, Phil Duggard is his name, told me it was the best pastors conference he had ever been to, and I told him it was my last as far as Shenandoah Baptist Association was concerned.

JEFF: Yes.

DAVID: You know.

JEFF: Wow. Something that’s going to play probably a whole chapter is going to be dedicated to this, the main thesis, of this dissertation is church planting. It is one of the things that SBVC values. And it’s one of the, I think, five of their core type values, but we pour a lot of money.

DAVID: Jeff, it’s what drives us.

JEFF: Well, tell me about that and okay why they thought that was really important and they still pursue it?

DAVID: Again, we felt from the beginning that we wanted to build a convention at the expense of Devil not at the expense of other churches. So our whole thrust has been to plant churches because when we plant churches we’re building at the expense of the enemy. So that was our thrust and God in his grace brought a man called Geoff Hammond into leadership that was a missionary but understood the principal of churches planting churches, planting churches, and I’m quoting Jeff.

JEFF: Oh, yes, I’ve heard him say that many times.

DAVID: So, fundamentally that’s where we came from. We wanted to build a convention that would build the kingdom of God at the expense of the Devil. So that’s really been our drive, Jeff.

JEFF: Uh, well, it’s been really neat to see. We are about, I think this year is 13 years for the SBCV. We had our ten year celebration.

DAVID: Yes.

JEFF: What are some of the things, I know there are many, what are some things that stick out in your mind that got us through and particularly the first ten years, but you can even go on to where we are today?
DAVID: Well, you know, I think it all started with the focus. See I think it was Howard Lindsell who wrote the book, “Battle for the Bible.” And in spite of what was being said that it was political in the Southern Baptist Convention we never accepted that.

JEFF: Yes, yes.

DAVID: We felt that it was the Battle for the Bible, period. So for us it was the establishment of a Bible Conference that would fade the brethren.

JEFF: Yes, yes.

DAVID: Pastors who needed their batteries recharged would be able to go to a place. So initially it was a yearly Bible Conference. Once we got established we began to do so much more in the way of an evangelism conference, a youth pastor’s conference. So it has been for me, that has been a source of feeding for our pastors. So, where I am, that’s one of the highlights, that we have a resource where our men can be stimulated, can be fed, can be built up whether it is in the area of children’s work. It’s interesting to see that when we do our VBS Conferences, when I was in Lees last year and went down to Spotswood for their VBS Conference and you know I sat talking to a young fellow and he tells me which church he’s from and his pastor is Dallas Stallings. Now that probably doesn’t mean anything to you, but Dallas Stallings sat with me after that infamous Christmas dinner and said to me, “David, I don’t believe in the virgin birth. I don’t believe in physical resurrection. I don’t believe in the existence of hell.” And so I said, “What do you believe in?” He said, “I believe in the Law of God.” And of course I could go on with that story. But my point is that there’s his church sending their VBS staff to Spotswood. Why Jeff? Because they knew that’s where their staff was going to be equipped to run a successful Vacation Bible School. So it’s interesting that even the BGAV churches are using our resources. And the key for me as long as we keep the main thing, the main thing, churches planting churches, men of God been fed and built up, you know, again it’s honoring God’s Word that’s the key to it all.

JEFF: Okay. I don’t remember if we got this on tape or not, but you were sharing with me a little bit also on a tangible side about the budget what it started out to be and what it is now. It started out at what?

DAVID: Well, my memory, again.

JEFF: It is 70 something.

DAVID: I thought it was about, I think our first budget was 75,000.

JEFF: I think that’s right.

DAVID: As I said this last year it was 10.2 million. Ask me to explain it, I can’t. It’s the smile of God. And we have experienced since our formation the smile of God. As
the Jews, and boy they had a major focus on the face of God, you know, you go back to Jacob and experiencing the smile of God. And Jeff, our convention has experienced the smile of God.

JEFF: Yes, yes.

DAVID: But it goes back to what God says and what God promised, them that honor me, them will I also honor. God has honored us.

JEFF: Well, it started out with a handful of churches, and now it’s approaching 600.

DAVID: Yes.

JEFF: And there not, they’ve not been, one of the things at SBCV, I know from other men and you verify this and elaborate, have not purposely targeted BGAV churches.

DAVID: We’ve done the opposite.

JEFF: They come and they want, based on knowing the strong stance on the Word of God, and they want a lot, they know, hey, that’s who were supposed to align with. They said we’re going to have to build it through planting churches.

DAVID: Jeff, it’s interesting. I do quite a bit of revival preaching. It’s interesting that a lot of the liberal churches will call me and ask me to do a revival. Some people said to me, “How can you go and preach in a liberal church?” And I said, hey, I always remember what David Deplace said, he was down in South America and he had a friend that was an evangelist. And the Grover County Priest asked the evangelist to go and preach in his, the old Catholic Cathedral and he refused and the Priest said, “Don’t you want my people to hear the Gospel?” So the evangelist said, “Of course I do.” He said, “Then why will you not come and preach?” The evangelist said, “It’s the idols! They trouble me.” You know, the statutes in the church?

JEFF: Yes.

DAVID: So the Priest said to him, “Well, if I cover them up will you come?” So the evangelist said, “Yes.” But he went before he spoke the Priest said to his people, “Now you’re probably wondering why the statutes have got clothes on today.”

JEFF: Clothes on.

DAVID: “It’s out of love and respect for my brother that I’ve done it.” Now David asked the question, “Who won the day?” Well, to some degree the Roman Catholic Priest did. So, somebody said to David Deplace, “Would you have preached in the Roman Catholic Cathedral?” He said, “I sure would.” He said, “What would you have done about the idols?” He said, “I’ve got enough love to cover them.”
JEFF: Yes.

DAVID: You know Jeff, that’s where we’ve got to be. You know I will not, I will not step back on my convictions.

JEFF: Right.

DAVID: You know I will speak out. I’ll speak out about our political situation without hesitation, Jeff. Hey, if they don’t like it, they invited me to preach.

JEFF: Right. They didn’t invite you to join them, just to preach.

DAVID: So I’ll preach the Word.

JEFF: Yes.

DAVID: You know, if, I need to be honest with you, God has blessed Rileyville here. You know we average, you know, down at a little church just the other side of front row, right.

JEFF: Yes.

DAVID: But you know Rileyville averages over 400 on a Sunday. You don’t get here by accident, Jeff.

JEFF: No. It’s out in the country.

DAVID: You know people because, and again Jeff, I preach revivals and sadly I’ve had people come, start to worship with us, and I’ve got to apologize to the pastors for taking some of their members and that response has been well, David, if they’ve come to you, they’ve come for a reason, and it’s been good. And really, Jeff, that’s where we are as a convention.

JEFF: Yes, yes.

DAVID: You know there’s a need and there’s a desire and I really believe that SBCV is meeting it, you know.

JEFF: Is there anything else you’d like to add, maybe that I might have left out or I’ve exhausted you pretty good today, brother.

DAVID: Yes, I can’t think of anything Jeff. And you know if you’ve got any questions call me.

JEFF: Okay.
DAVID: E-mail me, I don’t mind. Let me give you one of my cards, Jeff.

JEFF: Please do.

DAVID: Then you’ll have my e-mail address.

JEFF: Well Brother, I want to thank you so much for letting me come and sit down and talk.

DAVID: My privilege, my privilege. I am so thrilled that you’re doing this.

JEFF: Thank you.

DAVID: Because somebody needed to it and I hope that SBCV will get behind you in the publishing process.

JEFF: They probably will.

DAVID: You know.

JEFF: Let me go ahead and stop this.
JEFF: The first question that I’m going to ask you Brother Jeff Ginn is it all right that we’re going to be taping this interview?

JEFFERY: Sure, it’s fine.

JEFF: Okay. Do you know from your standpoint, I know you weren’t here back in the fellowship years and those kind of things, but what the national picture was like?

JEFFERY: Oh, yes.

JEFF: On the conservative resurgence that’s happened, let's talk through some of that on what you know.

JEFFERY: Okay. Well, I think I have a somewhat informed background on that, because when I went to seminary it would have been just as the conservative resurgence was getting cranked up. And I went to a school that’s an anomaly, it’s an anomaly because it’s not a Southern Baptist School in the sense that it does not receive CP money, nor are its trustees elected by the Southern Baptist Convention.

JEFF: I didn’t realize that.

JEFFERY: But the flip side of that coin is, it may be the most Southern Baptist School there is, because the founding president and professors were very committed to Southern Baptist missions. Southern Baptist model of doing missions through cooperative program. So, while we didn’t receive cooperative program monies, we were taught to support the cooperative program, to love the convention, and to work cooperatively. But the school was started because there was no good alternative at that time for a strong conservative seminary, that was evangelistic and true to inerrancy. And so I went to Mid-America. So, you know, it was right there with Belleview Baptist Church and Dr. Adrian Rogers who was the first president during the conservative resurgence of the SBC. So, from that prospective I was very informed of what was going on in the convention nationally and the struggles, and what was at stake, and the validity of the struggle. That it wasn’t just quibbling about words but there were eternal ramifications.

JEFF: And in the process, and I may even give Dr. Patterson a call, because the process, even though you’ve got a conservative president in, and I think it was ’78, I think some of the men have shared that with me, I’ll have to go back and see whether it was ’78 or ’79, when Brother Adrian –

JEFFREY: You can research that, but I think it was ’79, but –
JEFF: Yes, but it took another several years until like ’88 to get the first Board dominated – Dominated by conservatives.

JEFFERY: Yes, it was a lengthy process.

JEFF: Sure it was. You know because it’s like five years on seminary boards, and maybe four years on like the International Mission Board, you know those trustees and those positions.

JEFFERY: Yes, with the way it is now, for example, at the IMB, if you’re elected as a trustee you can serve eight years, two four-year terms. So, yeah, in fact like if Rogers’ got on there and he started appointing conservative men. Well, many of those that were on there and perhaps were of more moderate leaning they wouldn’t be off for eight years. Unless they passed, or they had already been on there for seven or eight years.

JEFF: Right.

JEFFERY: And they would rotate off. But it takes a long time to turn a battleship and that’s what we were doing.

JEFF: Brother do you know anything of why and this maybe too early for you, the SBCV started a fellowship first, and it started in, they actually voted on it in ’93.

JEFFERY: Yes.

JEFF: And it was January 28th, ’93, at Old Forest Road Baptist Church up in Lynchburg; Art Ballard was the pastor at the time. You know, I’m going to be giving him a call later.

JEFFERY: That will be good.

JEFF: You know any of the reasons around, I know Brother Doyle had given me a lot of information on that.

JEFFERY: Yes, I probably ought to just defer to others, I mean, I’ve heard, and of course, it was over issues like, you know, the pro-life issue, and the liberals of the BGAV. And it was just a group of men who felt like, hey, we’re giving our money but we have no voice, and we don’t like the liberals of BGAV.

JEFF: Right, right. That’s obvious. Well, let me jump down, because I would have been here even before you got here then.

JEFFERY: Yes.

JEFF: Let me jump down to where we are. Some other things, do you know how the name, how they came up with the name Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia?
JEFFERY: Not really, I don’t know that I’ve heard the exact story.

JEFF: Okay, once this is processed you will be able to see that instead of us taking up time and recording it here. But that’s interesting to hear the different men talk about how they even came up with the name.

JEFFERY: Have you already got ten to hear that story?

JEFF: Oh, yes, oh, yes. Once I stop the tape we’ll go ahead and share that with each other. It’s pretty neat.

JEFFERY: That’s neat.

JEFF: Were you, do you know how they drafted the Constitution?

JEFFERY: No.

JEFF: Okay. Do you know how they came up with the purpose statement?

JEFFERY: No.

JEFF: Okay. Because then they had their core values, they had, you know, they had the objectives, strengthen, support, start, send. Then the core values they have foundation, fellowship, focus, function, future.

JEFFERY: Yes, yes.

JEFF: Maybe you can tell me the dynamics or in your position now the dynamics around, let me go to the objectives, because I know ya’ll are focusing in on that now. You know, they’ve got strengthen, support, start, send.

JEFFERY: Yes, interestingly we’ve kind of repackaged that.

JEFF: But what do they really mean by those, like strengthen, support, start, send, what do they mean by those objectives?

JEFFERY: Yes, well, and again we’ve really repackaged that. Strengthen existing churches, support pastors and their families, start new churches, and send out missionaries, church planters, etc.

JEFF: Right.

JEFFERY: And I’m not sure if you are aware of this, Jeff, but just this past year we altered this, and really again it’s kind of a packaging reformatting of it, but we talk now about the three “Ms.” They are number one, Multiplying Churches, the idea that we need
to multiply the number of churches, and that’s church planting. The second “M” is Maturing Churches, Ephesians 4:12 says that we, of course, that those who lead church, “God’s given leaders to the church so that they may equip God’s people for the work of ministry until we all reach maturity in Christ.”

JEFF: Right.

JEFFERY: That’s the idea of helping churches move toward maturity, doctrinal integrity, those kinds of things. So you’ve got Multiplying Churches, Maturing Churches, and then the third thing is Mobilizing Churches. The idea of Mobilizing Churches is that the church exits to fulfill the great commission. And we’ve got to get out of the four walls, and we’ve got to send missionaries and collaborate in the great commission with the IMB and the NAMB, etc, and so Multiplying Churches, Maturing Churches, and Mobilizing Churches.

JEFF: And that’s on the website now when you pull it up.

JEFFERY: Oh, yes, it is.

JEFF: So I’m going to write this in there, the three “Ms”. Well, Jeff, let me do this, since you are currently the Executive Director.

JEFFERY: Yes, yes.

JEFF: This has happened within the last year?

JEFFERY: Just over a year ago, yeah.

JEFF: What were you, what were you, you were at Mid-America and you graduated from there. And later on you were over the school up in . . . Tell me a little about that, and how you got to Virginia, what you were doing, and how did you get to the job you have now?

JEFFERY: Okay. Yeah, I graduated from seminary with my M.Div. in ’86, and then with a Doctorate in ’91, and during my schooling years, of course, I was serving churches, first as a Youth Pastor, and then as a Pastor. But when I graduated in ’91 we went as missionaries with the IMB, and we were in South America for two terms, and we served in the country called Columbia.

JEFF: Yes, yes.

JEFFERY: And then we came back to the states to direct the Northeast Campus of Mid-America Seminary, which is in Schenectady, in New York, which is like a suburb of Albany.
JEFF: Yes, I know where that is.

JEFFERY: Yes, well, that’s where we were serving. And I came to Virginia, now I guess it would be 9 years ago, is was in the year 2000 I came. And came to pastor a local church called Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, as you know, and served there until one year ago, so I was there for 8 years, and one year ago I came to this role as Executive Director.

JEFF: Tell me a little bit about how, you don’t have to go into detail, but how did that happen? I know it’s God’s call but how did that, because you were very involved with us at the SBCV, as a pastor.

JEFFERY: Right, absolutely, I loved the SBCV because of its missionary impulse. It’s not a bureaucracy, it’s you know, a vibrate missionary entity, and so I loved that, and was on the Board, and led committees and those kind of things. So, yeah, so I had somewhat of an inside view of the SBCV. And not only was it missionary, missionary entity, but it was solid in its doctrinal moorings and convictions. And so those things together made me love the SBCV. And when Dr. Hammond was called to the North American Mission Board, I had two or three people contact me and say, “Hey, can we put your name in, we feel like you would be a good candidate.” And the search committee ended up, you know, coming back to me. So I came to Mount Pleasant in the year 2000, and I served there until 2008. When I came here, that was on June the 1st, 2008, and I started my ministry here. I worked alongside with Doyle and the staff. And I’ll tell you something too, Jeff, have you ever stood at a distance from a house and as you look at it looks like it’s in good condition and you see the white paint and everything looks, looks good, but then when you get up close to you and you’re like man this paints peeling, you know, it’s kind of dingy, this needs a new coat of paint. And I’ve told people before, I said, “I always admired the SBCV from a distance, but now that I’ve gotten up closer to it, I admire it even more.” Because I’m on the inside, and I see the caliber of our staff, and their commitment, and the churches, the harmony that exists, and the closer I’ve gotten the better it looks, not the worse it’s looked, so . . .

JEFF: The thing I’ve shared with some of the other men, Jeff, is the fact that I came in ’95 from northern Delaware, from Independent Baptist.

JEFFERY: Oh, yes, yes.

JEFF: So, my entrenchment in Southern Baptist life was here. Now, little did I know when I was in college I went to a ton of Southern Baptist Churches in other states.

JEFFERY: Yes.

JEFF: But the only convention that I’ve ever known is SBCV. So even though I’m going to Florida, which is a conservative state, bureaucracy throughout the convention reigns. You know, so, we did have a bit of hesitation and pain in our heart to leave Virginia.
JEFFERY: But tied to this, of course, is when the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 got approved by the Convention.

JEFFERY: Yes, yes.

JEFF: Right.

JEFFERY: I know better, there are. Now, maybe what he meant was, you know, relatively speaking there are very few moderates or true liberals in the sense that they would deny the virgin birth or they would deny the resurrection. But there were some even of those.

JEFF: You mean pastors?

JEFFERY: Yes.

JEFF: Their congregations?

JEFFERY: And, you know, professors who were very moderate in their positions.

JEFF: Oh, yes.
JEFFERY: And so there needed to be a conservative resurgence and when the SBCV took that stance on the Word of God they took the stance that is essential for the long term vitality and faithfulness of an organization. Here’s the thing Jeff, if you let go of any inerrancy eventually evangelism dies, missionary impulse dies, because if the Word of God is not true, for example, that those apart from Christ are lost, why in the world are we going to spend millions of dollars to send them and risk our children’s lives, you know, on foreign fields, in hostile lands, if the Word of God isn’t true? You know, if there are many roads to God, for crying out loud, why would we risk ours lives and waste our money sending missionaries. So with, so if you ever let go of inerrancy you lose your reason to exist.

JEFF: That has been a recurring theme over and over again dealing with the interviews that I have been having.

JEFFERY: I’m sure.

JEFF: The issue of inerrancy, nationally the stance, the strong stance, on the Word of God, because then that becomes what somebody else wants to make it.

JEFFERY: I’ll tell you something, Bro, you know an article that would be worth finding, if you can get your hands on it, there was an article written entitled, “The Heresy of Inerrancy.” The Heresy of Inerrancy and it was written by a retired Southern Baptist Seminary Professor, I think his name was Bartley, Henley Bartley, or something like that. You’d have to Google it. I think he taught at Southern, and in the article as its title implies he was taking the position that not only is it wrong to say that the Bible is inerrant but it absolute, it is in reality heretical to claim that it is inerrant. And that article is part of what stimulated Mount Pleasant to switch conventions. That article was published in the Religious Herald. And I told my deacons –

JEFF: Well, I’ll be able to find because I’m going to be archiving.

JEFFERY: Yes, you can look that up. You can look that up. And I told our deacons at Mount Pleasant, I said, “Look Brothers you’re telling me here’s a fellow this why we had the conservative resurgence right here.” He was a professor at one of our seminaries and he was saying not that he disagreed with inerrancy but it was heretical to embrace it. You’re a heretic if you believe the Bible has no errors. Of course, his deal is what you’re doing is creating an idol of the Bible, you’re making it an idol. Instead of worshiping God you’re worshiping the Bible; you’re saying it’s inerrant. And, so anyway, it’s just ludicrous, but that’s why I took such a strong stance in inerrancy.

JEFF: I was wondering where that came from. I was trying not to get to that before you just said it. You know, since you’re talking about the inerrancy issue, that’s the statement I’ve heard over and over again, was that we were accused of worshiping the Bible.

JEFFERY: It’s ridiculous.
JEFF: So maybe it came out of this.

JEFFERY: That would be a voice that, you know, that represents that view. It’s ridiculous.

JEFF: Well, Jeff, you were here when they, you probably were interacting with SBCV by the time that they went to what they called decentralization.

JEFFERY: Yes, yes.

JEFF: Now they had that in mind when they started. But they actually took steps to decentralized, talk about what that means and how that is working.

JEFFERY: Yes.

JEFF: You know because tell me about what like, the other conventions whether it was BGAV or others around the state have a certain model, where they have associations. SBCV wanted to do something different.

JEFFERY: Yes.

JEFF: The term that comes up is that they decentralized.

JEFFERY: Absolutely, and I’m sure you’ve heard this over and over but I’ll give you my take on it, and that is, rather than having a central office where you have all the personnel for the state convention housed there, instead we want to get them out in, you know, the distance points of the state, where our churches are, be close to our pastors, be close to our churches, have a presence in the far flung corners of our state. Know the culture of the distinct parts of our states, know the needs, have an ear to the ground, be in touch with, put a face to the convention. And it’s that, serve the churches, serve the churches. We exist not to be served but like Jesus, he didn’t come to be served, but he came to serve, and the SBCV exists to serve and to help churches fulfill the needs.

JEFF: So there are people on staff?

JEFFERY: Yes.

JEFF: That are actually in various locations around the state?

JEFFERY: Yes, yes.

JEFF: How many locations?

JEFFERY: I can provide you with maps.
JEFF: Great.

JEFFERY: That would be, that would really make some good graphics for your publications.

JEFF: Yes, yes, got it.

JEFFERY: And I don’t know if it’s 50 spread around the state, and then if you include church planters and their spouses, because we include missionaries and their wives, we count them.

JEFF: That’s right.

JEFFERY: So –

JEFF: But you have like what, maybe five areas, six, seven, or something like that?

JEFFERY: Well, yes, and now we’ve gone to five. We’re going that way. That’s getting into the restructuring that we’re doing right now.

JEFF: Right.

JEFFERY: Vision 20/20.

JEFF: Right.

JEFFERY: And I don’t know if that comes up in your questions, but –

JEFF: It doesn’t, but you can just share those kinds of things, because you’re going to be more informed of the future side of things which we can incorporate.

JEFFERY: Yes.

JEFF: You might as well go on.

JEFFERY: I would say this since we’re talking about decentralization, as we move forward we intend to accentuate that and continue to be decentralized even to a further degree than we have been thus far. Namely, here’s how, when we reduce from seven areas to five, we’re reducing the number of full-time missionaries, state missionary staff that we’re deploying, that frees up two full salaries and their benefits, and you can imagine how much that would be, to be reinvested in Associates, what we’re going to call Associate Missionaries, who can lead in cluster groups within the region. So if you’ve got five regions, but within each region you have several cluster groups, or fellowships, then you can have an Associate manning those, so in a sense we’re going from seven missionaries, and I’m thinking here of our church in Richmond, missionaries.
JEFF: Right.

JEFFERY: Instead of seven on the field, we’re going to five that are full-time but give each of them three Associates. So you go from seven people decentralized, to five full-time and three Associates in every area, so that’s actually 20, so you’re going from seven to 20.

JEFF: Right.

JEFFERY: For roughly the same dollar figure.

JEFF: Right.

JEFFERY: So it’s a further decentralization getting closer to the churches.

JEFF: Let me, I’m trying to watch how much input I put into this, because I need to draw it out of you guys.

JEFFERY: Yes.

JEFF: Illustrations, okay, I was at Amelia Baptist.

JEFFERY: Yes.

JEFF: If I wanted to have some training I didn’t have to call out here to SBCV, all I did was call Don Mathews.

JEFFERY: Yes, and you had one of the best.

JEFF: Okay, that was one of the missionaries.

JEFFERY: Absolutely, absolutely.

JEFF: If I wanted to deal with church planting I called Larry Black.

JEFFERY: Praise the Lord.

JEFF: You see, you know, then they would meet with me.

JEFFERY: Yes.

JEFF: Then we would meet at a restaurant, or come to the church, or it was not come on down to the office and let’s talk.

JEFFERY: Yes, it’s I’ll be there.
JEFF: Or where can I meet you.

JEFFERY: Exactly, yes, and Praise the Lord for that. So we want to further that. That’s a value that is held high in SBCV life and we want to accentuate it. Now the other thing is this Jeff, and I think the Lord is, he’s afoot in Southern Baptist life. For example, let me give you three or four things that are going on right now, the GPS at the NAMB. The IMB just did a major restructure, I’m not sure if you’re familiar with that.

JEFF: Yes, yes what’s GPS?

JEFFERY: GPS, is Global, God’s Plan for Sharing.

JEFF: Okay, God’s Plan for Sharing. You’re familiar with that; right?

JEFFERY: Yes, see when you say GPS, I think of the satellite first.

JEFF: Yes. You know, but I have heard of GPS.

JEFFERY: Yes, it’s the NAMB and it’s their strategy leading toward your 20/20. This is Jerry Rankin’s little booklet, “Vision for Global Advance,” and they’ve restructured the IMB. We’re doing Vision 20/20 here at the SBCV. We just got a call from Dr. Hunt for the great commission resurgences and there’s a task force, great commission task force, that’s been appointed by the SBC. So at every level of Southern Baptist life that state level, the NAMB, IMB, national level there’s a look at structure and a lot of it is driving at the principal of honing our focus so that the great commission is while we exist and we’re funneling as many resources as we can at that, at that end. So in SBCV life, when I say we’re reducing from seven regions to five that’s part of the reason why so we can put more resources at the harvest. We’re going to streamline our events, probably reduce the number, still give the quality, but instead of having a deacon’s conference, a minister of music conference, children’s conference, CLC, we’re going to combine those into one master event. Looks like we’re going to call it E-4-12, E-4-12 is the name of the conference.

JEFF: E-4-12.

JEFFERY: E-4-12 stands for Ephesians 4:12.

JEFF: Yes, that’s what I picked up on right away.

JEFFERY: So get all those equipping conference and collate them into one. And it’s an effort to be a good steward. And here’s something else, in my heart, we as the SBCV half of what we receive in cooperative program gifts we immediately send on to our national, to Nashville.

JEFF: You’re trying to get ahead of me, but that’s good.
JEFFERY: That’s okay.

JEFF: Because that’s a question, the question was even though you weren’t here in its founding you understand what they do with the 50/50 share.

JEFFERY: Yes.

JEFF: Why did they decide, as far as what you know, because Doyle can tell me more?

JEFFERY: Yes.

JEFF: Why did they decide to go with the 50/50 with the corporate program?

JEFFERY: You know interestingly enough, Jeff, that was the original proposal when the cooperative program was started as I understand it. You might need to do some research on this.

JEFF: Yes, yes.

JEFFERY: But when the cooperative program was launched, the proposal was that every state convention send 50 percent on to international and national needs and 50 percent is retained for building the work within the state. So that was the original proposal, but over the years states began to retain more and more and more and more, and really it’s been the two new conventions that have been launched that said, “Hey we’re going to go back to the original intent and we’re going to send more on to the international fields and to our national cooperative efforts.” So there’s a sense in which we went back to the future.

JEFF: Right.

JEFFERY: Back to the original intent, and further more let me say this, too, while I’m on it, I was told and you will need to research this, but there was a challenge put to the churches that the churches not retain so much. Your average Southern Baptist Church now, I think, gives only six percent to the cooperative program, or something of the sort, 6.5 percent, whatever it is. You look it up, in the original proposal what was the challenge to the local church. I’ve told you what the challenge to the State Convention. The problem is, individuals are not giving what they should, churches are not sacrificing and giving what they should, State Conventions are not sacrificing and passing on what they should, people are keeping too much of the pie at every level along the way. In my heart would be even in the SBCV, although we are at the pinnacle of what State Conventions do, Texas exceeds by a little I think, the new state, but we’re near the top. I’d like for us to keep less and give more. I wouldn’t be surprised to see us inch above 50 percent that we’re sending on and reduce what we’re keeping. I wouldn’t be surprised to see that.
JEFF: Yes, yes.

JEFFERY: That’s probably what we’re discussing in the Vision 20/20. Now that’s not a done decision so don’t quote me that that’s going to happen.

JEFF: Right, right.

JEFFERY: But that would be my heart as leader, that we do streamline, we do insure that we’re not moving toward bureaucracy and that we get the most resources to the lost that we can.

JEFF: Yes, yes. I know some churches even though it’s not part of this, but some churches they take it real serious, they try to do a 10 percent of their budget, meaning this is our tithe as a church, whole body to what we believe what is going to go on with the state and nationally, and here would be a 50/50 split.

JEFFERY: Yes.

JEFF: With that.

JEFFERY: Yes, hey brother I always practice that in the churches I love. I believe in it. I’m not saying because I sit in this chair. That’s what I did as a pastor.

JEFF: Yes.

JEFFERY: And so that’s my stance on it, absolutely my stance.

JEFF: Something that is very significant it has been part of the DNA of SBCV from the beginning even though it’s been one of their core values, has been a dominate core value, is church planting.

JEFFERY: Yes.

JEFF: I want you to elaborate from your position, and what you know of, like reasons behind church planting.

JEFFERY: Yes.

JEFF: That’s a big thing we pour a lot of money and energy into church planting.
JEFFERY: Yes. Our intent has been, you know I mentioned a moment ago, when we received the receipts from the church, 50 percent right off the top we send away, we give away. Of the 50 percent that we retain half of that or more has been intended for church planting. So church planting is huge. I mentioned the three “Ms”, what used to be the four “S”; starting churches got a full 50 percent of all that was retained in Virginia. That tells you what a priority it was.

JEFF: Yes.

JEFFERY: Four objectives, but one of them received 50 percent.

JEFF: Yes.

JEFFERY: So it was the queen of all the objectives, and it remains that until today. Church planting is the queen of our objectives.

JEFF: Well, why is that so important?

JEFFERY: Well, uh, because ultimately we exist to fulfill the great commission. You know, we got to guard against a welfare mentality. I’m going to give you a quote, Jeff, that’s been on my mind a whole lot lately, there’s a quote that goes like this, “Democracy is the best form of government ever invented, and it will work until people discover that they can vote to give themselves money, and when they discover that they can give themselves money, it’s doomed to fail.” You know, I’m worried about our nation.

JEFF: Yes, yes.

JEFFERY: It’s like I have discovered if I’m voting on this candidate or this party, or this platform, I’ll get something from it. I like that. And so rather than the old John F. Kennedy quote, “Don’t ask what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.” We need that, we need that nationally, but we need that within our state conventions, too, and our national entity. If our churches have the mentality I’m going to be a part of the SBCV because of what I can get from the SBCV, it’s kind of an unhealthy, it’s kind of unhealthy in a way. Now obviously, do we exist to help our existing churches, we do. That’s one of our “Ms”, maturing churches, we exist to help ensure that our churches are growing, healthy, sound in doctrine, etcetera, no qualms about it. But that can’t be the chief reason for our existence. Do we give so that we can get back? Is that why we’re in the state convention? No, I’m in the state convention, and I’m in the Southern Baptist Convention as far as that goes, I’m in it not for what I can get, I’m in it because it’s a mechanism to reach the world for Jesus. And so church planting to me has proven to be and even if it had not proven in actuality to be from a Biblical standpoint, it is the preferred methodology for fulfilling the great commission. I mean you follow, you trace the footsteps of the Apostle Paul, what did he do? Did he evangelize? He did, but he gathered them into local congregations and that’s what gave Christianity the ability to self propagate and to sustain itself. He didn’t just go to
individuals, he coalesced them into bodies that would reproduce, and so that’s why we exist. We exist to plant churches.

JEFF: Well, Jeff, what are some of those? When I go into the records it’ll pull some of this up, but what are some of the resources that the SBCV uses to help in the church planting efforts?

JEFFERY: Well, it starts with our personnel. Roughly half of all our personnel are dedicated to church planting. And we are blessed; we have a staff that just knocks the top out in church planting. They understand it, and so that’s where it starts. It starts with our human personnel. Beyond that though, there’s a four part processing. Here’s a name that ought to be on your list, and that’s Mark Custalow who heads up our Multiplying Church Division. But there’s a four step process, it’s like readiness, recruitment, launching and follow-up, or whatever it is, but he can go over those with you. And so there’s actually a process in place for getting the field ready, you know, doing the surveys to find out where churches are needed, etc. There’s a recruitment process for finding church planters, and channeling them to where the need is. The launch process they coach you in that. Follow-up, we have an extensive follow-up where you get evaluated after your first year, after your second year, after your third year. So there’s a nurturing process that goes on. So, I don’t think that the SBCV takes a backseat to anybody in terms of its equipping of church planters.

JEFF: Well, do they have a designated period of time like three years?

JEFFERY: In theory, yes, in theory, yes.

JEFF: Okay.

JEFFERY: It’s not a straight jacket.

JEFF: Okay.

JEFFERY: Some plants might be able to sustain themselves after one year of existence, so we might partner with them for a year financially, but they’re ready to be independent and a full-fledged church within a year. Others might take four years or five years and we need to watch that, because we can over extend ourselves. But, and you don’t want to create dependency either. You want those churches to get to a point of self-sustaining.

JEFF: Right. Well, without going into great detail on the financial side.

JEFFERY: Yeah.

JEFF: What does the convention do to help in the church planning efforts?
JEFFERY: Okay. Before I answer that in a point blank fashion, let me give a principle, and the principle in this, churches plant churches, churches plant churches. So, the convention which is nothing more than the corporate presence of the churches, that’s what we are, we are the extension of the churches, but still churches plant churches. So we never launch a church, we never seek to launch a church unless there is a mother church. And so financial funding, in answer to your question, the funding of the church plant how does that happen, the mother church contributes to it directly, often. The church planter himself is going to be involved in funding it through his own tithe, for example. You know he’s going to give to the church he is planting. There will be other churches that will come along side and say, we believe in this young man and his wife, if it’s a couple, we believe that God’s call is on them, we have burden for that area, they’re going to come along side. So there will be a coalition of churches. Then the state convention contributes from the cooperative program monies that are given to us.

JEFF: Yes.

JEFFERY: And that can range from a, you know, a very modest amount to several thousand dollars a year.

JEFF: Yes.

JEFFERY: So there’s a gamete, and uh.

JEFF: But then also like with the money that’s set aside with the state convention for church planning you can verify this, things I already know about, is that well you might have a trailer loaded with sound equipment and chairs. And you know if they’re going to set up in the school you have those kinds of resources which took finances to get those things.

JEFFERY: Absolutely. Yeah, yeah, the training events that are offered, obviously that takes money to do.

JEFF: Yes.

JEFFERY: And that’s funded through our cooperative program. The personnel that we have on the field to coach and mentor; they’re funded by cooperative program giving. Yeah, so, while let’s say a church plant receives, just let say they received $36,000 a year from us, that really would only represent a portion of what they truly received by virtue of what’s brought to bear on that church plant in the form of our personnel, worship trailer, land, money for land that they might purchase, yeah, etc. So, uh, Mark Custalow again would be, you know, he would be ten times better than me in answering these questions.

JEFF: And some of it is not even, if you think about it, is not even financially related, you got time, and energy, and –
JEFFERY: Fellowship.

JEFF: Fellowship.

JEFFERY: Encouragement.

JEFF: It’s important to this.

JEFFERY: Absolutely. In fact that’s probably the most important thing that we bring is, because you could put a guy out there and fully fund him, but not mentor him, not encourage him, not coach him, and all the money in world could be for not, because it could fail, it could fall flat on its face.

JEFF: Yes.

JEFFERY: And conversely even with all the encouragement and mentoring it still could fail, you know.

JEFF: Yes.

JEFFERY: It’s an organic process, it’s not a mechanical process, and there are a lot of variables.

JEFF: I know you keep going back to Mark, do you have any idea of the success rate that SBCV has in the church planting?

JEFFERY: I do have an idea and it’s shocking.

JEFF: Would this be like against the national numbers, or –

JEFFERY: Yes, I think that can be provided to you.

JEFF: Okay.

JEFFERY: The thing that shocked me, and this is somewhat of insider, as a pastor I mean I knew we were a church planting convention, and I knew of some success, I had no idea that the sustained, the sustained ability of the churches is near 90 percent. Very few fail, relatively speaking, very few fail. Now Mark Custalow can give you all the hard data on that, or Larry Black.

JEFF: Yes.

JEFFERY: But it’s actually, it’s surprising, it’s far more successful than you would initially anticipate.
JEFF: Wow.

JEFFERY: Yes, it is a "wow." Absolutely is a "wow." At least that’s the information that I’ve been provided and you can examine it, too.

JEFF: Let me write Larry’s name down.

JEFFERY: Yes, Larry Black or Mark Custalow, and Mark’s the starting point for all that.

JEFF: Well, Jeff, I’m going to ask you a question related to, it’s really the last one I have on here.

JEFFERY: Yes, buddy.

JEFF: And then you can add anything after that you think I’ve missed from your prospective.

JEFFERY: Okay.

JEFF: I think this year makes 13 years for the convention; we had a ten year reunion.

JEFFERY: Yes.

JEFF: I probably, well you know stuff from reading it, but I happened to be fortunate enough to be there when we started, but what are some of the highlight things that you see that God has done in the, since the birth of the convention until now? I know the first budget I’ve got that, it was like $75,000, you know, compared to like now is 10.3 million or something, you know. What are some of those things that just stand out to you?

JEFFERY: Stand out to me. Highlights would include –

JEFF: Or results that you’ve seen.

JEFFERY: Well, highlights would be, some of things we’ve talked about.

JEFF: Yes.

JEFFERY: The 50/50 split, that’s a hallmark, and that’s a highlight. Only two conventions nationally max that. So that would have to be a highlight. Church planting that 50 percent of all that is retained at least goes towards church planting, that’s a highlight. The number of churches of planted and sustained is a highlight. And now it must number well in excess of a hundred and Mark Custalow can give you that number.

JEFF: Yes.
JEFFERY: And we’re probably planting on average 40 churches a year now. So, that would be definitely a highlight. Geoff Hammond’s election as President of NAMB would be a highlight. Doyle’s successful tenure I think would be a highlight. Convention, and the testimony that our convention has nationally. I was talking to Dr. Akin and they’re doing this Great Commission Resurgence –

JEFF: You’re a little bit familiar with that?

JEFFERY: Yes. The cry for hey let’s look at ourselves, let’s revamp, you know, let’s do better. I talked to Dr. Akin early in that process, this was before the Southern Baptist Convention this year, and when it was all made public and voted on and everything, I called him a couple of months ago, and I knew that they were wanting to restructure, especially state Conventions, and I said, “Dr. Akin,” I said, “If you could just kind of recreate us and we have a 50/50 split in terms of what we are retaining, do you think that’s about right, do you think it ought to be significantly different?” He said, “Jeff,” this is not verbatim but it’s what he said.

JEFF: Yes.

JEFFERY: Just the jest of it, he said, “Jeff, you guys are what we wish all state conventions were.” I don’t think you can quote him on that, because it would make other conventions mad at Dr. Akin.

JEFF: Yeah.

JEFFERY: But I’m just telling you.

JEFF: Yes.

JEFFERY: He’s like you guys are doing it right. You’re a model; we wish other state conventions. So, I’m just telling you we have an excellent reputation nationally, and so those are some of the highlights.

JEFF: Yes. Things started out slow, and it’s obvious that God has blessed, you know, one step at a time. Well, the only other thing, Is there any other thing from your perspective and even looking to the future, you touched on a little bit of that?

JEFFERY: Well, Vision 20/20 bears watching.

JEFF: Yes.

JEFFERY: And that’s going to; we’re going to bring a report in November. I don’t know, when do you have to turn in your work?

JEFF: Oh, I’m just looking to graduate next May, so.
JEFFERY: Okay.

JEFF: So I could –

JEFFERY: That’s something you probably need to keep watching.

JEFF: Yes.

JEFFERY: See what comes out of that.

JEFF: Yes.

JEFFERY: I think it’s going to be, you know things I’ve talked about, further decentralization, streamlining, greater resources to the harvest fields.

JEFF: Well, here’s something that hit me that I didn’t even think about until just then, and you and I privately kind of talked about this months ago. I think it was last November right before the annual meeting, but the downturn in the economy.

JEFFERY: Yes.

JEFF: What impact has that had on the giving to SBCV through the churches if any? Has it still been moving forward in light of where the economy has been?

JEFFERY: Yes. Well, you know, last year we did finish a hair ahead of where we had been the previous year. In fact the SBCV has never had a year that was lower than the previous year in terms of receipts, total receipts. Now, whether we will sustain that this year remains to be seen. But the Lord has been good to us.

JEFF: Yes.

JEFFERY: This year has been a rough year.

JEFF: It has.

JEFFERY: It was very small last year, but it was a growth year. This year at this juncture we’re 2.5 percent behind where we were this same time last year. So we will need to make up some ground in the latter half of the year, but I think we can do it.

JEFF: Yes.

JEFFERY: I think the Lord is going to help us to do it. So, that’s a long-winded answer to say that the churches are still being faithful in sustaining us.

JEFF: Yes.
JEFFERY: We tightened our belts, we told our staff we want to spend at 85 percent of what is budgeted. In other words, if you had a $100 you only get to spend $85. So that we’re sure that we’re responsible stewards.

JEFF: Right.

JEFFERY: And our guys have been very faithful to that, and so we’re well in the black.

JEFF: Right.

JEFFERY: You know, receipts are down slightly but our expenses are also curtailed.

JEFF: Yes, because the budget is really a goal each year. You’re shooting for that. Well, Brother, thank you so much for the opportunity to do this.

JEFFERY: You’re welcome, and we pray the Lord will bless your efforts.
Interview with Dr. Kelly Burris  
Conducted in Dr. Burris’ office at Kempsville Baptist Church, Virginia Beach, Virginia  
July 21, 2009

JEFF: All right, I’m with Brother Kelly Burris. Brother Kelly is it all right with you that this interview is being taped?

KELLY: Yes, absolutely.

JEFF: Well why don’t you, one of the best ways that I found out in doing this, I have that first question there, but you’ve been in Southern Baptist life probably all your life.

KELLY: I have.

JEFF: So you probably even understand that there are things going on even nationally.

KELLY: Yes.

JEFF: So what I would like for us to talk about and you just share the national picture way back in probably even before ’79 when Brother Adrian Rogers was voted in.

KELLY: Yes.

JEFF: There was that shift that was being made, the ground work was being laid.

KELLY: Yes.

JEFF: And then there were things that took place in the State of Virginia that eventually lead to a fellowship forming.

KELLY: Yes.

JEFF: Okay, if you would tell me about those things. What were some of those key things that were going on, some of the issues that were involved in all of that?

KELLY: Right. Well, I was, one of the things that influenced me, I was in seminary at Southeastern, and I graduated in ’75.

JEFF: Wow.

KELLY: And so, no, excuse me; I said ’75 excuse me, in ’81.

JEFF: Okay.
KELLY: And so, I was going through Southeastern during the resurgence that was taking place nationally.

JEFF: Yes.

KELLY: And Southeastern at that time was very, very liberal. And I was just hearing things from the professors that I just could not believe. And I remember sitting in class one time and I thought if I ever got in a position to help change some of the things that I was experiencing I would take advantage of it. And so Adrian Rogers, and Paige Patterson, and some of these guys were some of my heroes anyway. And as I began to see the Southern Baptist Convention really begin to take, take a turn around everything that they were saying was something that I supported strongly. So it wasn’t long after I graduated from seminary I was called to Virginia and I hesitated to come to Virginia because I knew that Virginia was known as one of the most liberal conventions in the Southern Baptist Convention.

JEFF: Your calling was here?

KELLY: Yes.

JEFF: Okay.

KELLY: And so.

JEFF: What year was that?

KELLY: I came here in ’87.

JEFF: Okay.

KELLY: And so, as I went to the first couple of the BGAV Conventions, I couldn’t believe some of the things I was hearing. And I felt like a lone ranger. I felt like that there was probably no other conservatives around here. To my surprise I found out later that that wasn’t true. And I remember going to the convention after I was here several years down here at Virginia Beach, and I remember Terry Harper, and I didn’t even know Terry Harper at the time. He gets up and he makes a resolution before the floor that we would establish a day of sanctity of human life on the calendar of the State Convention. But it was voted down three to one, and I just could not believe it. And during that time was also when homosexuality really came out. And the church was debating and all this. And I think Bob Melvin was the guy, I can’t remember, I believe it was, he gets up on the floor and makes a resolution that we as a convention would take note that we believe that the Bible states homosexuality was as sin. It was voted down three to one. It literally blew my mind. And so after that I started recognizing some of these guys. And so we began to have a little fellowship, drinking coffee, and talking about it. And the next thing I knew out of that came a true fellowship. A bunch of guys, and there was a rally that
began to take place. I remember going to Liberty, speaking over there and stating that something’s got to be changed. And I remember going to a couple of other churches. And several of us, it was like a mushroom effect starting to take place. And we never really thought about a convention at that time. Convention seemed to be so large and so complicated that it just didn’t seem that that was feasible at this particular time. So we just started having fellowships. And one of the fellowships, it rallied around a couple of things, number one the inerrancy of the Word of God.

JEFF: Yes.

KELLY: That was the primary thing that we wanted to go on record. That we stood firm on the inerrancy of the Word of God. We were watching the national picture, and we were watching the resurgence that was taking place and it influenced us strongly. They were taking a strong stance there, were felt like we needed to take a strong stance here.

JEFF: Well, it sounded like Brother T.C. Pinckney had a major role in this because later on the Banner came out. Because the Religious Herald was just spewing the left side.

KELLY: T.C., yes. T.C. was core a individual right there because he, he’s the one that kind of helped rally us together and not just rally. I guess you could say administratively, he knew how to put us in certain areas. We were in certain areas and through him we began to communicate what we were trying to do. And like you said the Banner came out of that. And we started having meetings and just discussing different things and different ideas. And out of that churches just began to come along. Pastors began to come along.

JEFF: What I’ve heard, if I interrupt each time just forgive me.

KELLY: Sure, go ahead.

JEFF: Different things that I’ve been putting together and even before the fellowship started. You know Brother T.C. was really good at knowing, challenging Pastors to get all your messengers, your full slate of messengers. We can do like the national level did, and we can bring back this convention.

KELLY: That’s exactly right. We thought that we could do that. We thought that if we would rally our messengers and rally our other strategic pastors and things of this nature that we could make a change. But it became quite evident.

JEFF: And we’ll get to some of that in just a minute.

KELLY: Yes, it became quite evident.

JEFF: So what was going on with the fellowship because it also sounds like you would have a pastor’s conference out of this long before the annual meeting of the BGAV.
KELLY: Right.

JEFF: To see how this was progressing.

KELLY: Yes. Before the annual meeting we would have the pastor’s conference. And we had men come in like Adrian Rogers. Adrian Rogers came and he spoke. We had men like Dr. Fred Wolfe and some of these other guys that were leaders in the Southern Baptist Convention. And it was a real uplifting, worshiping type of experience. We didn’t look at it as much as a political event at that time as much as we looked at it as a real spiritual warfare that we were experiencing.

JEFF: Right.

KELLY: And we would always have that prior to the annual meeting of the BGAV. And goodness it was amazing. It was like a revival spirit that we had in there. And every year it seemed like it just began to grow and continuing to grow. And out of that I did —

JEFF: Do you remember when it first started about, I don’t know the exact number, about how big it was and then how, you know?

KELLY: Oh, I think, well, I remember the first one we had and I think it was in Roanoke. I can’t remember, it was in a hotel, and we probably had maybe 100, maybe.

JEFF: Right.

KELLY: But then the following year it probably was 150, I mean, you know.

JEFF: Right.

KELLY: Which was considerably large to us.

JEFF: Right.

KELLY: Because most of us felt like that, as I said earlier, that we were all by ourselves.

JEFF: Yes.

KELLY: And there were more conservatives in the state than we realized.

JEFF: I’ve heard that statement from the others.

KELLY: Yes, it was amazing. And that was very encouraging. And the fellowship among us really began to grow. That’s what’s been so unique about this whole thing. The fellowship, the harmony, the unity that we had. I can hardly remember any disagreements that we had because our major core values was based upon inerrancy of
the Scripture, based upon what we had seen taking place with the national level. That we felt like we needed to move in that direction. And it just continued to grow, continued to grow. And, of course, there was an election of officers from that type of fellowship. I believe Tommy Taylor was the very first President of the first fellowship that we had.

JEFF: I think that is correct. You voted to be a fellowship in January 28th, 1993 at Old Forest Road Baptist Church.

KELLY: Yes.

JEFF: Art Ballard was the Pastor at the time.

KELLY: Yes, I remember that quite well, and Tommy was voted to become President. Tommy was a real strong leader during that time.

JEFF: Yes.

KELLY: He voiced strong opinions, gave great leadership, and was coming from a flagship church.

JEFF: Yes.

KELLY: He was very, very useful in that time.

JEFF: Comical part of the interview is when I was with Brother Doyle and he said he had a conversation with somebody. And he’s sitting up in the balcony and got elected Treasurer. And his pastor was looking at him, and he also gave him a pass and said, "What just happened?"

KELLY: I remember that, I remember that. In fact I think I was sitting with Doyle that night, that day. Well, we used to, me and Tommy, and Doyle, and Jess, I think that was us we, I can’t tell you how many miles we drove back and forth to Richmond and Spotswood, and Roanoke, in these earlier meetings. Because during those early meetings we began to think about well we needed to set up a committee for a name. How do we come up with our name? We had to, we thought about Treasurer, the finances. I remember as if it happened yesterday, we were at the Golden Corral and –

JEFF: The napkin.

KELLY: The napkin.

JEFF: I asked Doyle to tell me about the napkin.

KELLY: I would give anything if we had that napkin.
JEFF: That’s what he said, "People want that napkin."

KELLY: We were sitting around the table and it seemed like it was Terry Harper, Doyle, and myself, and T.C., and I don’t know, we began to think about well we got, we need to do this. And Doyle reaches over and gets a napkin. And he starts writing all this stuff out. And it ended becoming our budget for that first year.

JEFF: Because I have the first one, it’s like $75,000.

KELLY: $75,000.

JEFF: Yes.

KELLY: And it was. That was quite amusing.

JEFF: Let’s back up because you mentioned something that, you know, as these interviews have gone on, I have been able to pick up on other things. How did you come up with name? Do you remember?

KELLY: Yes, I remember. I remember where we were at. We were at your former church.

JEFF: Swift Creek?

KELLY: Yes, we were sitting there, and we were talking about what kind of name. And I don’t remember who suggested it but somebody said well, we’re Southern Baptist, and somebody said we’re conservatives, somebody said well we’re from Virginia. And that’s exactly how it came up. Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, and we were at Swift Creek when that took place.

JEFF: Now what were some of the reactions to the name?

KELLY: Well, the name sounded good to everybody, and we decided to go with that name. But later on when we come to the time of the convention some wanted to take the name conservative out because they felt like it was too rigid.

JEFF: Right.

KELLY: And we discussed that a good bit. And I don’t remember who said it or whatever, but I do remember them saying it. They said, "Well, why should we be ashamed that we’re conservatives. Why not carry that name?" And everybody said, "Yeah, you’re right." So we chose to keep that name the way that we had it in the beginning when we moved into to become a convention.

JEFF: And that was affirmed overwhelmingly.
KELLY: Overwhelmingly, overwhelmingly.

JEFF: Most everything we do is confirmed overwhelmingly.

KELLY: That’s exactly right. That’s what’s been so uniquely, that it was God, that it was a God thing. That everything was overwhelming and that we hardly had any opposition. The only time, and it wasn’t really a major opposition, the only time that there was a little bit of opposition was the timing of when to become a convention.

JEFF: Yes, let’s wait to get to that one.

KELLY: Yes.

JEFF: Yes. Going back to the name Brother Howard Baldwin told me in that interview with him he said, he said, I was one of the ones at first not ashamed of conservatives, he said I was worried it was going to chase some people off.

KELLY: Right.

JEFF: You know being so strong. He says in hind-sight now when you see the printed material most of the time all you see is SBC of Virginia. So to most people it’s like the Southern Baptist Convention of Virginia.

KELLY: That’s exactly right.

JEFF: He said, "God has been so gracious through the whole process."

KELLY: Exactly right. When you speak of our convention you speak of it as SBCV not the Southern Baptist Conservatives.

JEFF: Well, what held you guys together during those early years before you became a convention?

KELLY: Well, I think what held, I think T.C. was a key person that held us together. He was constantly on the phone. He was constantly calling us, he was constantly getting us information, he was constantly reminding us of the importance of that we played in coming together. So I think T.C., and of course, certainly the Holy Spirit, were the key ones that held us together during that time.

JEFF: And I think that Doyle states this, and you can affirm, if you want to, is that you know most people don’t realize that T.C. is a layman.

KELLY: Oh, yes, absolutely. He was, he served on the Executive Committee of the SBC during that time.
JEFF: Yes.

KELLY: So, so he had some inside knowledge of the Southern Baptist Convention and what was going on.

JEFF: Yes.

KELLY: Which was perfect for us, and certainly helped us when we were getting ready to charter the new convention.

JEFF: Right. What were, were there any, was there any dialogue with the BGAV in leadership?

KELLY: Yes, there were. I remember what happened we met at First Baptist Church, no it wasn’t, it was a church in Richmond, but it was not a BGAV church. We had like 12 guys from the SBCV fellowship and they had like 12 guys, and it, what was amazing if you remember in the Southern Baptist Convention, Charlie Fuller was Chairman of the Peace Committee.

JEFF: Yes, yes.

KELLY: Well, we tried to do the same thing here.

JEFF: Well, let me see if this rings a bell, the committee of 15.

KELLY: Was it 15?

JEFF: In 1993, tried to reconcile.

KELLY: Yes, that’s exactly right.

JEFF: Committee of 15.

KELLY: It was 15.

JEFF: Seven on each side and a moderator.

KELLY: That’s exactly right.

JEFF: Okay.

KELLY: I remember that now. Yeah, I was one of the seven.

JEFF: You were.
KELLY: I was.

JEFF: Brother Doyle filled me in on the actual numbers and things of that nature, that kind of stuff.

KELLY: Yes. He would remember the numbers better than I would.

JEFF: He sure does. Well, what, do you know that finally lead to the decision to be a convention? And the reason I ask that and I’ve asked it of everybody is what I’m getting is that there was never was the intention to just be a convention.

KELLY: Never was.

JEFF: You know, some of these issues were there, the inerrancy of Scripture, I’ll just share with you, Brother Doyle told me about the annual meeting in 1992 where the resolution was put out about homosexuality and voted down.

KELLY: Right.

JEFF: But he said you need to remember the next year that it reversed it. But that, but remember we had whole year of dealing with that so just think about it in that context.

KELLY: They did reverse it because it made such a, it was such a controversy among the states.

JEFF: Right.

KELLY: And really that was the primary thing that prompted the fellowship of SBCV if you really wanted to point it back.

JEFF: Because then in January right after that November meeting in 1992-1993 is when you voted to be a fellowship.

KELLY: That’s right.

JEFF: That’s what Doyle said.

KELLY: That’s exactly right.

JEFF: Then they did something in ’95, the giving situation.

KELLY: Oh, yes. Yes, that was, that was –

JEFF: This was the year before we voted to be a convention.
KELLY: Exactly, and T.C. brought this to our knowledge too. That if you didn’t specify by vote of your own church specify to the BGAV what your giving would be, they would automatically throw you into a particular area of giving. A lot of people didn’t even realize that they were giving far more to liberal causes than they even realized. So this is where T.C. helped out again, he gave us.

JEFF: So, do you remember this? Were they? It actually took a constitutional change on the BGAV to go to those giving tracks.

KELLY: Yes.

JEFF: And then they made a constitutional change based on what stayed in the state.

KELLY: That’s right.

JEFF: How many messengers you can bring? So, you went from 15 to one or two.

KELLY: That’s exactly right. And it was that year that our church voted to leave the convention. Even though there was an SBCV.

JEFF: And give directly to –

KELLY: Give directly to the SBC. And a lot of churches did that. We just –

JEFF: And Brother Terry told me that they were . . . I don’t know what word he used, I’ve got it on the tape. They were kind of, for several years just withholding, stock piling, it until the right timing.

KELLY: We never did do that. We sent our money straight to the SBC.

JEFF: Yes.

KELLY: And just bypassed the state. And of course, the state told us at first we couldn’t do that. Well, we knew better than that because we were autonomous, autonomous, and we could do whatever we wanted to. We didn’t have go through the state.

JEFF: Right. Well, a lot of people, I came out of Independent Baptist my Brother, and what a lot of them don’t understand is that actually we’re all independent churches.

KELLY: We’re all independent.

JEFF: We choose to cooperate.

KELLY: That’s exactly right.
JEFF: We make a choice.

KELLY: And we didn’t have to go through the state. And so for several years our church chose not to.

JEFF: So within that ’95 to –

KELLY: Yes, that was key turning point there. It really was.

JEFF: So then that next year September 16th, 1996, at Grove Avenue Baptist was when they actually voted to be a convention.

KELLY: Yes.

JEFF: What were some of the circumstances leading up to that?

KELLY: The year before that we had our fellowship at First Baptist Church in Norfolk and Terry wanted to, Terry and several of the guys wanted to bring it before the fellowship that year to vote to become a convention. Well, I felt strongly against that because we didn’t have an Executive Director. I felt like that we needed a leader first to lead us to become a convention. And I said why don’t we, so that was the only, only, and it wasn’t controversy, it was just a difference of opinion, I spoke against the motion.

JEFF: Seems like there were a couple of others who felt that way, too.

KELLY: Yes.

JEFF: Some were strongly we need to go, and some were not ready yet.

KELLY: Yes. And I felt very strongly that we were not ready. I felt like to make this kind of step we needed to do a lot more preparation than what we had done. And we needed somebody that had knowledge to be able to do that.

JEFF: Yes.

KELLY: And so that decision was voted down. And out of that I was chosen to become Chairman of search committee for the Executive Director. And we had during that year had interviewed quite a number of people, and that’s when it goes back to the guy you just got through talking about.

JEFF: Yes.

KELLY: He wanted the position very, very bad. And we just didn’t feel, we interviewed him, but we just didn’t feel led. And right after that is when he went to the BGAV.
JEFF: Yes.

KELLY: But anyway out of that came the decision of calling Brother Doyle. And Doyle was, he just seemed like such an obvious choice. I remember sitting in my office and it was just as if the Lord spoke to me as you and I are talking that Doyle’s the guy. And so I called Doyle up and I said let’s have lunch.

JEFF: Was he at First Baptist at the time?

KELLY: He was at First Baptist. I said let’s have lunch. So I approached him. I said Doyle I said, “The Lord has laid on my heart that you’re the guy.” And he says, “Well, I’m not so sure, so let me think about it.” And I talked to the committee and the whole committee thought, man, that would be an excellent choice. With his background with BGAV being a former Treasurer he knew how a state convention is supposed to be run. And so sure enough as he came along, as Paul Harvey says, “You know the rest of the story.”

JEFF: Well, how did you’ll reach the decision that now is the time to go?

KELLY: Well, that gave Doyle several months of preparation, and we began to rally and so the following year.

JEFF: What did you’ll use to get out to the people, like the Banner?

KELLY: Oh, yes, through the Banner, and we were having still more rallies.

JEFF: Okay.

KELLY: Yes, we were still having rallies. And it began to snowball, this thing really began to snowball, and once we elected Doyle as the Executive Director, it was just a matter of time then. Because that was most of our concern was get us a leader first. Once we get a leader, we’re ready to go. And so right after Doyle was elected we had our constitution committee, we had finance committee, we were working with the SBC, everything just began to fall right in place.

JEFF: Well, how was the constitution drafted, I know Brother D.B. will help me with that, Martin, this afternoon, but from your recollection how did that, were you involved in any of that?

KELLY: I wasn’t involved in the constitution itself. Jess Jackson and Horace Sims and D.B. were the ones that primarily did that. They worked very hard, they just kept bringing us drafts. And we would look it over, we would talk about it. We would make changes, and they would go back, and then they would bring it back to us. There were several things that we wanted to make sure when we established the constitution. That we did not become a bureaucracy.
JEFF: Yes.

KELLY: That was the number one issue that we did not want to become a bureaucracy. We wanted to make sure that this convention would focus upon missions, evangelism, stand strong on the Word of God, you know, these were some key elements that we just wanted to make sure.

JEFF: Yes, yes.

KELLY: And by that with our I remember when we were sitting in a budget meeting one time making out the budget we wanted to make sure that all of our administration would be ten percent or less, and they’ve kept that.

JEFF: I remember, I can’t remember for sure, but I think I was at the meeting we voted to be a convention. But from that point on I remember statements from in the meetings. We want we to keep that ten percent or less, you know within there.

KELLY: And they’ve done that. They’ve done that.

JEFF: Were you involved in organizing of the purpose statement?

KELLY: No.

JEFF: You know when you go online you see the purpose statement, “The Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia is a fellowship of Southern Baptist Convention churches cooperating to assist local congregations in their task of fulfilling the Great Commission as commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ.

KELLY: Yes, yes, I was chairman of the committee.

JEFF: Okay.

KELLY: I was chairman of the committee when we came up with our purpose statement, and we thought long and hard about that. And there again a lot of this evolved over a period of time. We just didn’t sit down one day and write this out.

JEFF: Right, right.

KELLY: It was over a period time of trial and error. It was . . . I remember sitting in Richmond writing a lot of this. Going back to Baldwin, I remember he was a key person. He was very much of a key person because we needed a, someone to help us during that fellowship, so he did that. He and his wife worked out of their office and did a lot of stuff. So I don’t mean to be rambling but I didn’t want to overlook that.

JEFF: Absolutely.
KELLY: Charles, he did a tremendous job.

JEFF: He shared and others have shared one of the things that was happening nationally was, and you already alluded to this, many of our seminaries were liberal.

KELLY: Very much so.

JEFF: Prior to these the strongest might have been Southwestern, I mean you still have liberal professors there, you know, once the resurgence happened it took until ’88, from ’79 to ’88 to have just one trustee board, you know, controlled by conservatives.

KELLY: That’s right.

JEFF: Because of the process, I mean the appointments and things of that nature. And then Brother Howard, Brother T.C., they said education played a lot in this.

KELLY: Oh, very much so.

JEFF: If you’ve got seminaries pumping liberalism, you get liberal pastors, and then you get liberal churches.

KELLY: Well, that’s exactly what happened with Virginia and North Carolina, these areas. Southeastern was pumping them into these areas and that’s why they were so liberal. And I saw that first hand.

JEFF: Yes. It’s amazing that you’re a graduate from there, and you’re very firm.

KELLY: Well, I came out; I came out a stronger conservative than I did when I went in. But that I felt like I was an exception.

JEFF: Yes.

KELLY: Fortunately, I had some strong foundations.

JEFF: Right.

KELLY: And many times, I wanted to leave.

JEFF: But where did you come from when you went to Southeastern.

KELLY: I came from North Carolina.

JEFF: Oh, okay.

KELLY: Yes.
JEFF: These next two questions deal with the core values and the objectives that you see on the web-sites. Let me go to the core values. When did Geoff Hammond, ya’ll kind of hired him as a consultant?

KELLY: Yes.

JEFF: Before you even came, he came on as staff.

KELLY: That’s right.

JEFF: Did he play, what kind of role, or how did that, you know we’ve got core values that say foundation, fellowship, focus, function, future. Now they are all tied to missions in the church and those kinds of things. And then the objectives presently still state strength, and support, start, send which was changed into the three “Ms”, you know.

KELLY: The three “Ms” came about with Jeff.

JEFF: Right.

KELLY: Jeff Ginn.

JEFF: My interview with him, you know, brought that out, which actually captures all four of those into three.

KELLY: That’s right. Geoff came on about five years after the convention was established. And he’s the one that really helped us to come up with the core values. And what we did with the core values. We went back, and we revisited the constitution bylaws looking back over the last five years. It was during that particular time that, that we began to look at decentralization.

JEFF: And that’s one of the questions, and then if you get on that, then just discuss about that too.

KELLY: Well, I had already; I was already President during that time. I was the second President.

JEFF: I was just going to go back and find out when you were President.

KELLY: Yes, I was the second President. Terry Harper was the first and I was the second. And so when I was President we had talked about establishing core values. And we even talked about decentralization but it was more of a talk. So when Geoff came on as the Assistant Executive. Geoff was the one that really kind of got this thing started. That’s what I said, they asked me to become chairman of the Executive Committee, as we began to make that transition.
JEFF: Just for distinction for our interview, we’re talking about Geoff Hammond.

KELLY: That’s correct. Geoff Hammond, absolutely. And so the core values, the decentralization all came about together. In fact we voted on it together, and it took a year.

JEFF: And this was something that would have been in the Executive Committee?

KELLY: Well, it started with the Executive Committee. And then of course we brought it to the state convention one year and told them what we were planning on doing. And we’d bring a report the following year.

JEFF: Right.

KELLY: And that’s what we did.

JEFF: Yes.

KELLY: And the decentralization which was one of our goals even from the beginning. Our idea was that the convention would go to the churches, and not the churches come to the convention.

JEFF: Okay.

KELLY: As it has been done in the past, the men would sit in their offices, and if you needed something, you’d go to Richmond. Well, we felt that the convention worked for the churches, the churches didn’t work for the convention. And so we wanted our goal was to get the convention to the local church.

JEFF: Yes.

KELLY: Get to the guy that maybe would never come to Richmond. And we had two ideas that we really felt very strongly about. Number one was, planting churches. And we felt that healthy churches planted healthy churches. A sick church is not going to plant a church. And the second thing was to go and to help struggling churches, and struggling pastors. A lot of churches out there are struggling in so many ways that we don’t even know anything about it. A lot of pastors are very lonely, and so we thought, you know, if we could get some guys into these keys areas and be there on a day-by-day process of being in contact with these pastors. And these churches that that would strengthen not only them but it would strengthen our convention, strengthen our state. And so I remember taking the map and I remember Jeff on the Board just started dividing them up and we started looking at the different areas of the state. And then we began to look at where there were a lot of churches and where there were not too many churches. And I remember someone said wouldn’t it be wonderful if we had somebody in each one of those areas that would focus on nothing but church planting. Then we would have
somebody come along that would focus on nothing but helping these churches become healthy churches. And out of that it came the decentralization. And we started out, I think, was five areas, central areas, and that’s expanded the further we got.

JEFF: I think it went to seven and is back to five. I think that’s the case.

KELLY: Yes, I think it has come back to five. But it started out as five.

JEFF: That’s right.

KELLY: And then it went to seven, then it may. It has come back to five.

JEFF: Because none of those that are, what we call them in Richmond Missionaries, and then church planting strategists, none of hold offices in Richmond.

KELLY: No.

JEFF: They work out of their homes.

KELLY: They work out of their homes. That’s what’s so unique about it. Is that they only come, they are the ones that come to Richmond, not—

JEFF: I’ve been a pastor, and a youth pastor, it’s been a blessing. I’ve been on the receiving end of somebody living in my area. That as soon as I call them most of the time, it’s like: Do you want to meet for breakfast? Do you want me to meet you at the office? You want me to just –

KELLY: That was such, and no other state had ever done that. This was such a unique situation. No other state had ever done it. And I thought about it a number of times, I wonder why. And then I think the BGAV caught on to that, and I think the BGAV has tried to imitate that.

JEFF: Well, they still have, most state conventions including BGAV has associations.

KELLY: Yes, see that was the advantage we had what a lot of state conventions don’t have. Because what happened was if you had tried in other conventions, the Association of Directors would fight you, fight against that, because it was taking their job.

JEFF: Right.

KELLY: But we did not want to call them Associational Directors. We didn’t even want to call them Associations because it was different.

JEFF: Or Directors of Missions.
KELLY: Or Directors of Missions. We wanted it to look different and act different.

JEFF: Yes.

KELLY: And be different.

JEFF: Wow! Elaborate some about church planting, you know, of some of the core things that SBCV is involved with. For example, you know this Brother Kelly. . . .

KELLY: Yes.

JEFF: They’ve got certain things the laid out that say, "This is who we are, this is what we do." By far one of the things that stand out is church planting. We’ll talk about it in a minute - the 50/50 giving plan.

KELLY: Right.

JEFF: We’ll elaborate on that. Also, the 50 percent that stays in the state, about 50 percent of that goes to church planting.

KELLY: That’s exactly right.

JEFF: Why was that important?

KELLY: Well, we felt like that the best way to evangelize the state was through church planting. To start new churches, Paul did that. We looked at Paul in the Bible and the way he evangelized was planting churches. And we felt there’s not a better example for us. And by making our . . . when we were looking at our giving through cooperative program, we wanted to support the SBC. So, therefore, we said, (and no other state convention at that time had done this), that we’re going to give at least 50 percent to the SBC. We keep the 50 percent within the state, no more than 10 percent of that would go to administration, 50 percent of the total budget would go towards church planting.

Church planting what we would attempt to do, we would try to get key churches, this was the goal was that the convention didn’t plant churches, but churches plant churches.

JEFF: Right.

KELLY: And so that’s what we tried to stress over and over and over again. We’re here to assist the churches. We’re here to assist them financially. We’re here to assist with training. We’re here to assist them with material, whatever we can do. And so, but that church planter, he’s going to have to believe in the infallibility and inerrancy of the Scripture. He’s going to have to believe with what the Southern Baptist Convention and the SBC believe.

JEFF: Yes.
KELLY: And that church as well. And we come along side them and support them. And we, I don’t know how many, but I’m sure Doyle or others can tell you, how many church planters began to become available. We started working along with them now by planting them in strategic areas.

JEFF: One of the things, too, that, that is neat and you probably, can even think of other things, is that they normally will try to get a partner church.

KELLY: Yes.

JEFF: You’ve experienced that even here.

KELLY: We did.

JEFF: You know to assist with that birth of that church.

KELLY: Yes. We felt like that was key. We felt like that was key, that there had to be a birthing process. That there had to be a mother that would come along and nurture that young church, and by giving them resources, and by giving them individuals that would come along. So, what we found Brian Autry was a perfect example, he was a guy out of our church, and he went to Swift Creek, and Swift Creek helped birthed the church where’s he’s at.

JEFF: Yes.

KELLY: He served there or work along with that church, what almost year.

JEFF: I was on staff at the time.

KELLY: Yes, almost a year before they ever birthed that church. But out of that came some core people, resources, now look what the church is doing.

JEFF: Brother Kelly, I remember, you know, there are two aisles in the church, okay, and as a staff Brother Ronnie Brown, before we even put together the team to look at planting the church, how it worked at invitation time was he would stand in the middle, I would stand in one aisle, and another staff member, some of the others, at one time it was Brother Don Mathews.

KELLY: Yes.

JEFF: And when people would come we would do the normal, you know, invitation thing. Well, when finally Brian was the church planter he stood at one of isles and we had prepared the church.

KELLY: Yes.
JEFF: And Brother Ronnie would say, you know, if God’s calling you out to help start this church you go see Brother Brian.

KELLY: Yes.

JEFF: And look what God has done.

KELLY: Oh, it’s key, it is key. One guy going out there and to a store front and say, well, we’re open up for a new church, probably not going to make it, probably not, planting a church is hard especially in this day and time.

JEFF: Do you have any . . . I’ll be able to research in the records. Do you have any idea at all the success rate for the SBCV compared to like maybe nationally, or?

KELLY: I think if you would check, and this is just my observation and I don’t have anything to back it, but I think it’s pretty obvious that the success rate of the SBCV church planting is far more successful. Simply because we realize the reality of the hardship of planting a church. Number one, a lot of church planters don’t have the resources of their income, I mean, you know, that’s tough. Number two, having the resources of core people who are strong already as mature Christians, who have been leaders in other churches, who know how the church operates. You put that along with a convention with a home church and the Holy Spirit, you can’t help but be successful.

JEFF: Let’s go back to this question, is there a part of that resource well at least to a certain extent the pastors have at least a base salary?

KELLY: Yes, yes. We choose, we choose at the beginning that we would support these guys for at least three years. They would have a base salary. They would have their medical, even their annuity. And after three years, at the beginning it began to trickle down of the support.

JEFF: Right.

KELLY: And these guys would not have been able to make it if it had not been. And another thing that the convention did that I thought was very important, was helping seminary students. That was another key area. Yeah.

JEFF: Here I sit today, brother.

KELLY: Well, it was interesting we had a guy in our church that was going to Southern at the time and we were a part of the BGAV. And so, and we were in the top ten giving in cooperative giving and when they found out he was a member of this church they stopped his giving. Sent him a letter that said until your church begins to move back towards the BGAV, we can longer support you. Even though we were supporting them with 12 percent of our budget. So needless to say that helped prompt our church to move
in another direction. So what that did, that made me and several others, and our church wasn’t the only church that was targeted, but that made us very sensitive to our seminary students. That we wanted to support them, and we did. And that’s been a very strong area of our budget.

JEFF: Well, they have . . . they do have some support if you want to go to Southeastern or stuff like that, but if you go to Liberty.

KELLY: Yes.

JEFF: You know, and if you’re already a pastor or youth pastor, like I am, on my Master’s Level –

KELLY: Was paid for.

JEFF: And my Doctorate level.

KELLY: Yes.

JEFF: It’s been an absolute blessing.

KELLY: Where could you go anywhere else like that?

JEFF: It’s been incredible.

KELLY: See, I remember when Dr. Falwell came in and that was one of things that he wanted to do.

JEFF: Let me digress a little bit. You’ve covered this, but I want to get a good clear statement on it. Why was it significant for the SBCV to have such a strong doctrinal position? And I want to read just the first line because the Baptist Faith and Message was adopted in 2000 when that finally came out.

KELLY: Right.

JEFF: “We believe that the Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God, and is sufficient as our only infallible rule of faith and practice.”

KELLY: Well, once again we have been watching the SBC and we saw what they had, how strong some of these guys had stood. And we felt the same way, that we needed to do the same thing in our local area. And so a lot of that came, that verbalization came from the SBC. And that we were just affirming that we wanted that very thing to take place.

JEFF: So there were people denying –
KELLY: Oh, absolutely.

JEFF: That the Bible had errors. They were saying that the Bible had errors in it. They were denying it.

KELLY: Oh, absolutely. The BGAV had a number of pastors and leaders that were denying. And they were coming out of Southeastern. I had heard it, and I knew first hand that they were making fun of the miracles. You know, it’s just hard to believe today.

JEFF: Yes.

KELLY: Of how liberal the BGAV was during that time.

JEFF: Wow, wow.

KELLY: So we felt like we had to make a firm and strong statement.

JEFF: And I’m glad that the convention did that.

KELLY: Yes, I am too.

JEFF: Personally. Talk a little bit more about, we’ve covered it some, but that 50/50 giving plan from the get go that’s been the model.

KELLY: That’s was the model from the very beginning.

JEFF: Or the goal.

KELLY: Even when we began to establish our convention cooperative program of course was the major item that we kept talking about. But we were still, as I said earlier, in strong support of the SBC. We believed in the direction that they were going. We believed in how these seminaries were taking action against the Presidents and their Professors. We firmly believed in the International Mission Board, the North American Mission Board, and we wanted to be a part of that. And I remember Howard Baldwin was one of the ones that was very vocal on this from the beginning. That we needed to, "Why don’t we go 50/50?" No other state in the convention has done this. Let’s just go on record and set an example that we give 50 percent. Fortunately, we’re starting in the beginning, and we didn’t have a lot of overhead.

JEFF: Yes.

KELLY: I remember when Doyle came on as Executive Director he was in a little bitty office over here off of Virginia Beach Boulevard. And I remember when he moved in. He was bringing in all these boxes. He and Sharon were back there working. So we
didn’t have a lot of overhead like a lot of state conventions with their buildings and things of this nature. And out of that came the desire of not building a bureaucracy. That we would be able to do this from this point on and not change. And so there had been times that there had been suggestions in the budget meeting go 51, 52 percent. But because we were seeing such a success and needing the resources of church planning, we chose to stay 50/50.

JEFF: Yes.

KELLY: And I’m glad we did, and I hope we will always stay that way. And I remember when Texas came about they, they sought our advice on a lot of theirs in the very beginnings. And that was one of the things that they chose to do. I think they may have gone 51 percent now.

JEFF: 55.

KELLY: Is it 55?

JEFF: One of the reasons they’re, and I’ve not researched them, but one of the reasons is they still have connections with the Associations. So you talk about the overhead, so they are at 55, you know, our 50 still looks like that 55.

KELLY: Yes.

JEFF: So to speak, if you know what I’m saying.

KELLY: I do.

JEFF: Because they still give money in our churches, we don’t have to give, you know, to the State Convention plus an Association.

KELLY: That’s true.

JEFF: They still, those churches are still giving, you know, to the new convention and the association.

KELLY: I see.

JEFF: So –

KELLY: I knew that they went up, I just didn’t know exactly how much.

JEFF: Yes.

KELLY: But they started with 50, 50/50.
JEFF: Doyle confirmed that in his interview.

KELLY: Yes, that’s probably –

JEFF: Let me ask you one last question, which may prompt some others but, we’re going to be 13 years old this year. We had a big ten year celebration.

KELLY: That’s hard to believe.

JEFF: It’s hard to believe, I know it is. What are some highlights in the history of SBCV that stand out in your mind to what God has done for the convention? I’m sure there are tons of things, but what are some things you say stand out?

KELLY: That’s a good question because I don’t know where to start.

JEFF: Well, let me help you. The piece of napkin, the napkin, so financially, you know, that stands out in my mind.

KELLY: Yes, no question.

JEFF: 75,000 to what 10.3 million this year.

KELLY: That’s right.

JEFF: That’s incredible.

KELLY: That is incredible, that is incredible. I think that in the very beginning there were a few pastors just, started, sitting around a table drinking a cup of coffee and began to talk about that, how we needed each other. And how we needed to support one another. And out of that came that fellowship. I needed that because I, like I said, I didn’t know of any other pastor around here that I could really trust. I didn’t know Tommy Taylor at that time. But out of that experience came one of my dearest friends, Tommy Taylor. And that might not had ever happened had that experience not happened. I think that another key was, of course, electing Doyle. That really stands out. And when the Lord, how I felt that the Lord spoke to me that day to go down there and talk to him. That really stands out. And the relationship that I’ve had through him, and to see what God has done through him and Sharon over those 10 years, 11 years has just been phenomenal. I think another area, of course, is when Geoff came, and we did the decentralization. That was a key, key, pivotal point. And then of course with Jeff Ginn coming on, I think he was an excellent choice. I think he’s the man of the hour. And I’m just really excited about, I’m proud of what we’ve done, but I think the best days are ahead.

JEFF: Yes.
KELLY: I really do.

JEFF: Is there anything else you want to add?

KELLY: I don’t know.

JEFF: I could always call you on the phone.

KELLY: Absolutely, absolutely.

JEFF: Well, thank you so much for this time together.

KELLY: Well, I hope I’ve been of some help.

JEFF: I know you have. I know you have. Everybody fills in a little bit of a piece.

KELLY: Yes.

JEFF: More of the puzzle is coming together as we do it.

KELLY: Yes. I’d be anxious to get a copy of your thesis.

JEFF: I will give you a copy.

KELLY: Alright.

JEFF: I’ve told all the men and people that I’m directly interviewing that I will give them a finished product.

KELLY: I would love to have that to keep.
Interview with Dr. Tim Piland
Conducted at an Applebee's Restaurant in Suffolk, Virginia
July 21, 2009

JEFF: I’m with Brother Tim Piland, right.

TIM: Right.

JEFF: That’s how you pronounce it?

TIM: Right.

JEFF: And Brother Tim is it okay with you that we record this interview?

TIM: Yes, you can do that.

JEFF: All right you just share with me, even though I've got these questions, just share with me. There were things going on nationally. Brother Adrian Rogers became President of the National Convention in ’79.

TIM: Yes.

JEFF: So obviously there were things that were working up to that point.

TIM: Yes.

JEFF: Things that were concerning the conservatives. And then things happened in Virginia with the BGAV in reaction to the National Convention and then finally at one point in time and in January 28, 1993 a fellowship, SBVC Fellowship was born.

TIM: Yes, right.

JEFF: What was going on that kind of brought it all the way up to that point from your prospective?

TIM: Yes, from my perspective in ’79 I came off of active duty from the Air Force on staff. So from ’79 to ’90 I was in Louisiana, you know, and quite involved in what was going on with the SBCV, I mean SBC. And going to all of the annual meetings and voting and trying to get the conservatives back in control as a part of the resurgence. And then in ’90 I had the opportunity to come here, to Virginia. And it was, it was shell shock. I mean just a step from what I was experiencing out there in Louisiana. So we came back to Virginia and I say back because I grew up in Virginia. I’m from Norfolk originally.
JEFF: So I had, yes, I had seen Baptist, you know, from the inside before I went away to Southwestern to go to seminary back in ’66. But when we came back it was obvious that the BGAV was liberal but relatively unaffected as far as I could tell by the resurgence. And conservative pastors were from my vantage point, you know, basically blocked out. You didn’t have a lot of say. We were a part of the Black Water Association, our church was. It was extremely liberal. And so there were some events that caused us to withdraw from Black Water and join Portsmouth Association. While we were doing –

JEFF: Let me interrupt.

TIM: Yes.

JEFF: What were some of the things, because we use, we’re so used to using the terms conservative and liberal.

TIM: Yes.

JEFF: What were some of the issues, like I can give one, the inerrancy of Scripture was the big issue.

TIM: Yes.

JEFF: Nationally and here in the state, what were some of those issues?

TIM: The issue that really broke the camel’s back as far as our fellowship with Black Water Association had to do with a church in North Carolina that was getting ready to ordain a homosexual. And our church brought a motion, a resolution, at the annual meeting that we would send a letter to that church really admonishing them not to do this. Because at that time they had not decided to do it, it was just in the mill.

JEFF: Really?

TIM: We, our church did elect to do that. I brought that resolution at the annual meeting. It was discussed and passed a little over 50 percent to go ahead and send that letter.

JEFF: At the BGAV meeting?

TIM: No, no, no this was at the Black Water Association meeting.

JEFF: Oh, at the Association.

TIM: And which is certainly a reflection of what was going on in the BGAV. So that next week, I was thinking about the likelihood of that letter being sent, because we did
not have a Director of Missions or anything like that in the Black Water Association. It was very rural, a rural community of churches. So I called the President and told him, and I said I just want to make contact with you and, you know, see if we couldn’t work out a way to send that letter and how to word it. And he said I’m glad you called because you probably need to do that because all of our churches were not in favor of doing that. And I said well it’s my understanding that when it passed, and we had a majority, that speaks for our Association. He didn’t really feel that way. So we sent, we sent that letter. The following year we were not represented on any committee in the Association even though our church was underwriting one-fifth of the budget. I called him and said I don’t understand why we’re not represented, we’re not, we’re not represented but we’re paying a fifth of the budget. And his comment was we don’t make choices based upon what people give. I brought that to the church and from the floor someone made the motion let’s withdraw, and we did. And I believe it was unanimous to withdraw. Then we applied to the Portsmouth Association and all this is prior to the SBCV, of course.

JEFF: Yes, yes.

TIM: And that relationship went on for a couple of years and the SBCV Fellowship began to materialize, and I was active, actively involved in that. I was at the first meeting when we voted to have the fellowship.

JEFF: Back in ’93 at the Old Forest Road Baptist Church.

TIM: Yes, that’s right.

JEFF: And Brother Art Ballard was pastor at the time.

TIM: Yes.

JEFF: There.

TIM: And so –

JEFF: Well what was going, so were you, I know Brother T.C. Pinckney, who’s a lay person, started contacting pastors, you know, trying to put you, getting you together because Brother Kelly has told me and others have told me they’d go to the annual meeting of BGAV and feel all alone.

TIM: Absolutely. As a matter of fact the last meeting that we went to, rather that I went to, we were trying as a fellowship to get some say so, some representation as far as an officer was concerned, Second Vice-President, First Vice-President, make some kind of a statement on prolife. There was an issue about the University of Richmond serving alcohol. And I can still remember that last meeting that I was in where we were trying to get just the Right To Life Sunday on the BGAV calendar. And after someone spoke in favor of that motion, I was sitting behind a group of blue-haired ladies and I’ll never
forbid and one of them turned to the other and said he’s obviously not speaking about his
body. And I thought to myself this is not going well. Then when it came up about the
University of Richmond and withdrawing funds from any institution that would condone
the sale or use of alcoholic beverages on campus. That was soundly defeated. And that
was the last meeting that I personally attended.

JEFF: Yes.

TIM: Going back to the, the proportion of the Association we ended up withdrawing
from that. And I think it would be interesting for you to know why we did that. I
received a call one day from a conservative pastor in the Association asking if I could
attend a meeting. So, there were about four conservatives pastors, myself included, at
that meeting when we were informed that at the Portsmouth annual meeting. Portsmouth
Association annual meeting they had invited as a speaker a new faculty member of the
Richmond Seminary. Well, at that time I was on the Board of Trustees at Southern
Seminary so I was well aware of who was going to that seminary.

JEFF: That’s right.

TIM: And to me that was like, that was like waving, you know, a red blanket in front of a
bull for the conservatives. So we decided that a couple of us would go to the Chairman
of the Program Committee and plead that he not do this. That it was going to, it would
have really negative ramifications. I will never forget the day that the two of us went, I
was one of the two that went. We talked to him. We tried to say, "Look, bringing this
man in would be like the conservatives bringing in Judge Pressler."

JEFF: Yes.

TIM: You know, this is not something you want to do. And he basically said we’ve
extended the invitation and it’s going to stand. So, we began to just chat a bit and I made
a statement, I said, "You know, we disagree on a lot of things, but one thing that we must
agree on is Jesus is the only way, Jesus is the only way to salvation." And I’ll never
forget his statement and I can quote it to you, he said, “We know that Jesus is the only
way for us, but that doesn’t mean that God couldn’t have another way for somebody
else.” At that point I left and the next business meeting we were approved for the
Portsmouth Association on the grounds that two cannot walk together if they’re not
agreed.

JEFF: That’s right.

TIM: So that pretty much moved us into that.

JEFF: Probably shell-shocked when you heard that.

TIM: Yes.
JEFF: Now you’re trying to kill me.

TIM: So anyway, you know, then our church, Nansemond River, had a reputation for being a conservative church long before I went there.

JEFF: Yes.

TIM: So we were naturally a part of the conservative movement in Virginia because particularly after the resolution that had been presented. That pretty much labeled us as, I guess, conservative renegades.

JEFF: Well, what caused you all to start getting together, even before you voted to be a fellowship? What brought about those things because you were scattered throughout the state?

TIM: Yes. The communication network just, once it was a, listen I wasn’t an insider, so I don’t know how the list got together, or was brought together. But, you know, we were just kept informed and communication was the big issue. We had to talk together. And so whether it was a meeting, you know, we heard about it. T.C. obviously was a big part of that.

JEFF: The Banner started in ’88.

TIM: And so you know we had the tool. And once the meetings were available, it was kind of like thirsty men and you heard where the water was.

JEFF: Uh.

TIM: And so I really believe that the BGAV shot themselves in the foot when they totally shut out conservatives. Because they would have been miles ahead to have said, you know, we need to let these people have a part, you know, a say.

JEFF: How did they do that? How did they shut you out?

TIM: Well, we couldn’t get anything done, any kind of motion that was brought. Like, I mentioned trying to get the Right to Life Sunday on the state calendar. Trying to make a statement about the sale and use of alcohol at the University of Richmond. Trying to get even a Second Vice-President elected. Totally, you know, nothing and so it became very obvious that we had no other choice but to form our own. There was an effort to try to be a part, and try to reform from within.

JEFF: Yes.

TIM: But we were not allowed to do that, and therefore, the break was a natural result of that.
JEFF: One of things that I’m discovering is that Brother T.C. Pinckney was really good at trying to help you as pastors to organize. To get your full-slate of officers, messengers to the BGAV annual meeting.

TIM: He was.

JEFF: And you can confirm this, others have that there was never the desire to start a convention, never.

TIM: Yes.

JEFF: It was, like the National Convention. We can have a conservative resurgence here in the state.

TIM: Yes.

JEFF: And they did something, I’m trying not to put the words in your mouth because I know what it is, they, the BGAV did something. You know, not only did you deal with issues that you’ve already shared about the right to life, but they also took a vote in the annual meeting in ’92 on homosexuality. You know, it, well, it failed of trying to do a resolution, but the next year they reversed it.

TIM: Yes.

JEFF: But in ’92 when that happened in November, January was when the fellowship was formed.

TIM: Yes.

JEFF: So you see it’s, you know, things were building even though they reversed it the next year. But then in ’95 they changed the Constitution and By-laws. And only what money was staying in the state could you send messengers.

TIM: Yes, that’s right.

JEFF: So this by-law change, that’s what I was trying to get to. This was really a big push to stop you from –

TIM: Because conservative churches were not going support something that we didn’t believe. Therefore, we were still giving through the BGAV but it was all designated.

JEFF: Yes.

TIM: Yes, I’m looking back a number of years; it’s been over 30 years so I have to try real hard to remember everything.
TIM: But there was, you know, there was an orchestrated effort on the part of conservatives to do what was right and try to bring about change. It wasn’t devious but it was orchestrated. We were organized in it. The motions that would be brought, people who would bring, speak to a motion or whatever. But it was almost like a locking of knees and a joining of hands and saying we’re not going to let these conservatives pastors have a voice. And so we voted with our money. That’s the only thing you can do.

JEFF: Yes.

TIM: We were still giving to the SBCV. We weren’t banking it.

JEFF: The SBC you mean.

TIM: I mean, I’m sorry, the SBC.

JEFF: Yes.

TIM: SBC. But we were not going to put money into the SBC, the BGAV, into an organization that we, which we disapproved. So then they tried to counter that. So it was, it was, really no choice but to form. We were, you know, I look back we had no other option. There was no other option but to break and to form.

JEFF: They took those giving tracks and then constitutional change came in ’95 and based on which was overwhelmingly approved. Based on how much money stayed in the state you had messengers. So many of you went from 15 to 2 if you had a decent size church, some guys went down almost nothing.

TIM: Yes.

JEFF: So they knew, I know Brother T.C. and others, and Doyle said we knew at that point we were not going to be able to take over the convention, bring it back conservative. They didn’t use word take over, bring it back conservative.

TIM: Yes, but by that time a lot of conservative churches weren’t going anyway.

JEFF: Right.

TIM: It was a waste of time.

JEFF: Others have told me that they were getting so discouraged going that nothing, you couldn’t get anything approved.
TIM: I don’t remember the date of the last one of the incidents that I mentioned before, but they were meeting in Virginia Beach I believe. I can’t remember where it was, must have been a convention center there. I don’t remember the date. That was it. I had no desire to go to another one after that.

JEFF: Well, during the year from ’95 is when that vote happened that limited your messengers, to the following September, September 16, 1996 at Grove Avenue Baptist Church, I was there, we voted to be a state convention.

TIM: Yes.

JEFF: What were some of? What was going on, you know, with the conservative guys and everything. What kind of led them to say, "Now is the time to pull the trigger?"

TIM: You know my feeling is, up to that point it was almost like a holding back. I think most conservative pastors already wanted to withdraw and form our own convention.

JEFF: But it had never been done.

TIM: Well, that’s right. But, you know, we were so burned, and so aggravated, we were ready. And so there was a holding back from my vantage point, and rightly so. Because we needed, we needed to do everything we could to try to work from the inside, and to be a part. But when it was obvious that that was not working, once the go ahead and there were people at the helm, just like in Virginia is like it had been with the SBC.

JEFF: Yes.

TIM: That when those at the helm, you know, said it’s time, you know, this is not going anywhere. Well it was just like opening the flood gates. You know we’re ready, we’ve been ready. So, it was a sense of excitement but no surprise. It was not at all a surprise.

JEFF: Right. How did they come up with the name if you know? At any time, Brother Tim, I ask you a question that you don’t know, or don’t have info on just state that. How did they, Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, did you know about that? Did you have an input on that?

TIM: I remember being a part of a committee or something. I can’t remember where it was, where we were talking about a name.

JEFF: Kelly thinks it was back at my former church, Swift Creek.

TIM: I can’t. I don’t remember, but I do remember the discussion and making, people making suggestions. But I don’t really know. I don’t know where that came from. I don’t know who suggested it.
JEFF: I don’t either. It’s interesting, Brother Howard Baldwin, he said at first he was well, opposed to being conservative. He was wondering if that was going to run off some people, or scare off some people.

TIM: Yes.

JEFF: He said he was not afraid to be called a conservative. He said now in hind sight what God had done over the years, in all their print media all you see is SBC of Virginia so it looks like the National Convention.

TIM: Yes.

JEFF: You know, unless you know and a part of it you know that stands for conservative.

TIM: Yes.

JEFF: If all you see is the letterhead and it says SBC of Virginia.

TIM: Yes.

JEFF: So he said that kind of worked out real neat anyway.

TIM: That’s right.

JEFF: Yes. Did you have any involvement in the formation of the purpose statement?

TIM: No.

JEFF: Okay. What about the core values or objectives.

TIM: Yes, yes.

JEFF: Okay. Brother, they, a lot of the formation, I’m finding out with that and how it even got extended when they hired Brother Geoff Hammond before he came on staff as a consultant.

TIM: Yes, yes.

JEFF: You know he came in as church planter, I think down in this area.

TIM: Right. Yes, right.

JEFF: Because right now when I talked to Jeff [Dr. Ginn] when you go on-line they’re changing the objectives. There were four objectives strength, and support, start, send.
TIM: Right.

JEFF: To the three M’s, which capture all four of them, you know, multiplying, maturing, mobilizing. He was able to, Jeff Ginn, was able to share with me, you know, how we move into those three instead of the four.

TIM: Yes.

JEFF: He called the four captured in the three. Something that I find, that I want to read, and I’ll state it in a question.

TIM: Okay.

JEFF: Why is it significant for the SBCV to have such a strong doctrine position? I’m going to read the first line of the long doctrinal statement, because the other part captures the Baptist Faith and Message 2000.

TIM: Yes.

JEFF: When that came up. But here’s the first sentence, “We believe that the Bible is verbally, is the verbally inspired Word of God, and is sufficient as our only infallible rule of faith and practice. They made that a very strong statement, your thoughts on that.

TIM: That was the issue. That was the issue with the SBC; it was the issue with the BGAV. Let’s face it, when the SBC resurgence began, I lost my train of thought.

JEFF: Dealing with the inspired, verbally inspired.

TIM: Yes, you know, the real issue, you know, was the Bible. But there was also a, if you will, a power base behind the liberal movement. And, you know, from my vantage point, you know, one of the legs of that was Virginia. It was Virginia, North Carolina, Southern Seminary, you know, there were legs of that liberal element.

JEFF: What I’m finding out, Brother Tim, they were feeding, some of that comes back to education.

TIM: Yes, oh yes.

JEFF: Seminaries were training liberal pastors that were going to churches that may have been, the body, may have been mostly conservatives. But then they get liberal doctrine thrown at them.

TIM: Yes. But when the SBC experienced its resurgence the liberal power bases didn’t necessarily do that. And that’s why in Virginia that it remained. I mean when I came
back here that’s why the culture shock of moving back into that. Because Virginia had not changed. It’s almost like, again from my vantage point, what had happened, what had been going on in the SBC imploded into the BGAV. And there were other areas but I wasn’t in North Carolina. You know I could just see it in the BGAV. And so just as the core question with the SBC had been, what is the Bible? You know, is it inerrant? And that’s why you are hearing in the resurgence inerrancy, inerrancy, inerrancy.

JEFF: Yes.

TIM: Then when you came to Virginia you had to fight that same battle again. Therefore, it became the issue. So it’s understandable that that would have to be very clearly delineated. And I think that’s what you’re seeing there.

JEFF: I’m glad it’s a very strong statement personally.

TIM: Oh, absolutely.

JEFF: They came into; they went into organizing the SBCV with decentralization in mind.

TIM: Yes.

JEFF: But they got to the point where they definitely made that happen.

TIM: Yes.

JEFF: I don’t know if it was around the time that you were President, or it might have been before that.

TIM: No, it was before that, may have been Kelly.

JEFF: Kelly might have been President.

TIM: But I was on the Executive Board at that time.

JEFF: So, what do you know about? What are some reasons? And what does that mean to decentralize and how does that working?

TIM: Well, I can answer that two ways, by what I saw going on in the SBCV and my heart, you know, what I was seeing. As far as the SBCV they wanted to not have a, if you will, a Nansemond or a roam, you know, a central part where the orders are being sent out. That it would be more relations than scattered out, that it would be more hands on. The side effect of that, and this where it gets my heart, is when you do that you don’t have a need for an Association. Think of the money we save. Now we had two percent of our undesignated gifts going to the local Association. When we withdrew from the
local Association and affiliated with the SBCV we had everything we needed right here because it was decentralized. That money was used to start a church.

JEFF: Wow.

TIM: We were able; we were able to bring Randy Green, the pastor of Harvest in Smithville.

JEFF: Huh-huh.

TIM: We were able to bring him on staff as our Mission Pastor and start the church within a church. Then eventually we sent out they and are a strong church today. I mean the funding for that, the local funding, came from what had been going to the Association because that money was available. So decentralization was a grand idea, grand idea, and still is.

JEFF: I’ve been a beneficiary of that. I’ve seen it in action. When I was at Amelia if I needed a church enrichment consultant I called him. I just got on the phone and called his cell or called his house.

TIM: That’s right.

JEFF: He’d meet me somewhere.

TIM: Yes.

JEFF: Or he came to the church.

TIM: Yes.

JEFF: If I needed to talk about church planting with a church planting strategist, we started with five with the whole Virginia broken into five, went to seven, went back to five again. There are reasons behind that having to go forward in talking with Jeff Ginn in going from some Associates and those kinds of things. That’s been real neat to see.

TIM: Yes.

JEFF: One of the other things that happened right away with SBCV was this 50/50 giving plan. Why don’t we talk about that a little bit?

TIM: Yes.

JEFF: And what does that mean? What is 50/50 giving plan?
TIM: Well, if you go back into the history of the Southern Baptist Convention that was always the desire. You know, the state should be 50/50, 50 percent stays in the state and 50 percent go to international causes.

JEFF: Yes,

TIM: National, international causes. You know, as a matter of fact when we get back to the office, I’ll show you a picture that I have that will really illustrate that. Maybe we can get you a copy somehow.

JEFF: That would be neat.

TIM: But it was every church giving 10 percent, every church a tither.

JEFF: Yes.

TIM: You know, give 10 percent, and then the states giving 50 percent to national and international causes. And so that’s how it had always been. You know that’s the way it was meant to be. So when we started, when the SBCV was started, you know, we inherited that. You know that was our DNA.

JEFF: Yes.

TIM: And we were not getting our DNA from what other conventions were doing. We were getting our DNA from what was supposed to be done. And I, it’s that along with trying to keep down administrative costs, to keep them under, I think it was under 10 percent.

JEFF: Ten percent, that’s right.

TIM: Yes. I mean these were guiding factors that were; they were hills to die on. These were things that were going to be the foundation. And it was just very well received. It’s kind of bringing up a child the way they should go. You know we entered that and I hope we’ll never depart from it. I mean it’s the right thing to do.

JEFF: Yes. Now that we’ve talked about that, the churches give our money and 50 percent goes to the cooperative program, 50 percent stays in the state, of that, okay, 10 percent is for administrative, 50 percent is church planting.

TIM: Yes, yes.

JEFF: Why the emphasis? Why? To put that much into it, it has got to be important?

TIM: Well, because there were certain things again that guided the start of the SBC.
JEFF: Yes.

TIM: One of them, the doctrinal statement, you know, what we believe. That had to be foundational. The funding, we were going to be traditional in that, 50/50. And then we were going to plant churches. Well when you think about it, when you’re starting out as a renegade, okay, you know, you’ve left the establishment what are you going to work with. What’s going to be your goal? Is your goal going to be well we’re going to keep whittling down these other churches until they join us. Or we’re going to get out and start new churches? And that was the direction that just, I’m going to say, evolved. I can’t remember anyone ever preaching that. It was something that was just kind of understood.

JEFF: Until later when Geoff Hammond came he would go churches planting churches planting, you know, that’s his famous statement.

TIM: Oh, yes.

JEFF: But that was later.

TIM: But what he did, he stepped in and he gave a description of what the character from the convention already was. That we were a church planting entity.

JEFF: What were some of the dynamics of a new church? What are some things statistically that maybe you know about with a new church? I mean dynamics.

TIM: Well new churches grow faster; you reach more lost people and un-churched people with new churches.

JEFF: Yes.

TIM: If you look at our own situation Nansemond River began in the very early 60’s.

JEFF: So that’s not a long history.

TIM: It doesn’t have a long history. It was a rural church when I came here in ’90 it was still pretty much a rural church, but north of us was changing, the dynamics, everything was changing. People were moving, it was becoming a bedroom community, 64 had come through and was bringing a lot of people in. So we were changing, but we still had that feeling of, you know, kind of an established church. Then we had the opportunity to start Harvest. We brought Randy in.

JEFF: And where is Harvest located?

TIM: Harvest is in Smithville.
JEFF: Okay.

TIM: And the way that started was we were getting a relatively large number of people who were commuting from Smithville.

JEFF: So you already had the dynamic that was going on in the church.

TIM: It was already, because there was not a Conservative Southern Baptist Church there. Franklin, I mean, Smithville Baptist Church was not known to be a Conservative Southern Baptist Church. So they were coming, a lot of them were coming to Nansemond River. And it, if you looked at it was one of the situations: God are you telling us something? Are you telling us something?

JEFF: Yes.

TIM: Well, things were coming together, there were several points that were coming together at that time, ends were meeting. We were seeing these people from Smithville. We had just become a part of the founding fellowship of the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia. That we want to plant churches, and what did we want to do with this. Well, it was obvious that we needed to plant a church. We had the money because we were no longer a part of the Association. When we removed that part from our budget, that two percent, we began to escrow one percent for church start. So that began being an escrow amount. We brought on Randy Green, a man that I knew from North Carolina. He had already started a church. He had a heart for starting churches. Brought him on staff, we gave him an office. And when he launched, and by the way, that’s another story but he it really was a church within a church. I wrote a paper on it entitled, “Church within the Womb.” You know, we had him standing down front every Sunday morning and people who felt like they were called to be a part of mission would come and join it.

JEFF: We did that at Swift Creek with Brian Autry from Parkway.

TIM: Did you? Yes.

JEFF: The same way.

TIM: Yes.

JEFF: He would stand on one side, Brother Ronnie would be in the middle, I’d be on the other side and the challenge was, prepare them for months kind of like you did.

TIM: Yes.

JEFF: God’s calling to help them.
TIM: So when the church launched, 75 people went out and started that church. And it’s new, it’s vibrant, and you get new families and you get newly saved people, you get un-churched people coming and it’s running probably over 400 now.

JEFF: That’s awesome.

TIM: Yes, so it’s kind of like a new Sunday school class, new classes grow. Well, new churches grow too. Now obviously I think you can carry that too far. You can just spread yourself out so thin you have no depth at all.

JEFF: Yes.

TIM: You’re a mile wide and an inch deep. We’re not there yet.

JEFF: Right, right. How significant or important was it that Brother Doyle Chauncey was chosen to be the Director, the Executive Director? What are your thoughts on that?

TIM: I think it was ordained of God. It was, Doyle was the man of the hour. I think he was put here for such a time as this. Doyle as a business manager he had a mind for funding, economics, a heart for God. A conservative, he was just the right man for the job. I know that God can do whatever he wants to, but I don’t know that the SBCV would be what it is today without Doyle because God used him. Doyle has his personality. He is gentle spirited. He’s not like a bull in a china shop, but he knows what he’s doing, and he has vision. And he was the kind of person you could rally behind and somebody you could trust. When I became an officer, and I started out as a Second Vice-President, and then later on when I was elected President, I felt that one of my jobs was to let them work. Let Doyle do his job. I wanted to support him and what he was doing. You know, it was it a matter of acquiescing what’s right or wrong. He had, you know, I had absolute trust of him.

JEFF: Yes.

TIM: But I wanted to support him in doing his job. And I never was disappointed in that, and still not.

JEFF: That’s awesome. It’s been great to see that kind of leadership there.

TIM: Yes.

JEFF: Something that I’ve had the blessed privilege of even as I sit here, is the connection with Liberty University.

TIM: Yes.

JEFF: The scholarship program.
TIM: Yes.

JEFF: Here I sit in this interview because of that very reason, partly because of that.

TIM: Yes.

JEFF: I think Dr. Falwell had, you know, a concept, you know, not only can we get some money if we wanted to go to one of the Southern Baptist Seminaries. But at Liberty, for Senior Pastors, Youth Pastors, it’s a full-ride scholarship.

TIM: Yes.

JEFF: That has been, I don’t know if you know anything, how that came about or?

TIM: Of course the foundation of all that was, you know, Dr. Falwell had reached out to a number of conservative well-known pastors like Jerry Banks, James Merritt, you know. Men who were I guess of conservative foundation that as the resurgence brought us back to where we needed to be that Dr. Falwell as a fundamentalist could relate to us. And the barrier came down. And I felt the barrier came down between Southern Baptists and Thomas Road and Liberty a lot quicker with Dr. Falwell than it did among independent churches.

JEFF: Yes.

TIM: But then Thomas Road became a part of the SBCV. I never talked with Dr. Falwell but I know he was a visionary and he probably had plans in being, you know, it stretched a long ways.

JEFF: Yes.

TIM: And it may, and that may have been a part of long range plans.

JEFF: Yes.

TIM: But I do remember that we had an Executive Board meeting and Dr. Falwell and his men were there and he was there to make a statement. And that’s when we said he wanted; basically he wanted Liberty to be a “Southern Baptist School,” you know, now that’s in quotes of course.

JEFF: Right.

TIM: But he wanted us to have, he was bringing a recommendation that we have a voice on the Board of Trustees and that basically it be affiliated with the SBCV. This was all by surprise actually. I didn’t know it was going to happen until I got there. It was a very, very exciting time.
JEFF: That’s neat, that’s neat. I think Brother Jeff Ginn told me that after he took the job over a year ago he didn’t realize by virtue of his position he is on the Board of Trustees. And he went to his first meeting and it was like, wow, you know. What’s happening, and still happening with God’s doing.

TIM: With the President there are two members, and that’s of course, the Executive Director and the reigning President.

JEFF: Yes.

TIM: So I had a couple of years on the Board and it was a neat experience.

JEFF: Good. I only have a final question unless you want to give other thoughts, and it’s we’re 13 years old this year as a state convention. But even to now, what are some of the things, and there’s probably many of them, and I’ve asked of all the different people I’m interviewing, what are some things that stand out in your mind that are obviously "God did it." You know, "wow," look at this. I’ve been told several times about the napkin budget, you know, from when Doyle first wrote that with a couple of them in a restaurant.

TIM: Yes, right.

JEFF: To what the budget was to what it is now. But you know things like that that just stand out in your mind that has taken place.

TIM: Well, of course, the money will get your attention either positively or negatively. And year after year, after year, of over subscribing the budget, you know, was an awesome thing. One thing that stands in my mind when we had a giving overrun, I mean, we had, and I forgot the figure over a hundred thousand dollars maybe it was a lot more than that. And we got together, I may have been President at the time, I can’t recall the time frame, but somehow I was involved in this decision making process of giving part of it as a gift to the SBC. And that God would do that, you know, we should have been a fledgling organization barely making ends meet and yet every year there was increase. There was an increase. So you raise the budget and then you over subscribed it. And that had to be of God. Doyle and his availability, what God was able to do.

JEFF: He was here first at Norfolk.

TIM: Yes.

JEFF: At the time.

TIM: That’s right. The building, you know. What do you do? If we are decentralized where’s the hub? You know, where do you meet? And the availability of that building,
and we’ve seen it grow. I really wondered if we wouldn’t finally just buy that whole thing, you know, we’re taking it over anyway.

JEFF: Yes.

TIM: There have been so many at the church in Washington that went under but gave the land to the SBCV, and you know, it appraised for millions. You know, you’re talking about a property in downtown Washington D.C. God’s been very good to us as a convention. I would have to go back to that first statement that you read earlier. You know, what do we believe about the Book. You know, we believe it’s God’s Word, no compromise on it, stand on that. That is what we’re going to preach, that’s what we’ll live by, and we’re going to be unapologetic about it. And God has blessed that.

JEFF: That is awesome.

TIM: I mean if you can hide the Word of God in your heart and it will keep you from sinning, what David said. What happens if you make the Word the very foundation of your organization? What’s God going to do with that? So, it’s, it is both a miracle and natural consequence. I should say super natural consequence.

JEFF: Yes, yes. That’s incredible. Well, Brother Tim I do not have any other further questions unless there’s anything you want to add to this. If you wouldn't mind, there may be times I might want to give you a call by phone.

TIM: Yes.

JEFF: You know, just to, you know, just to brush up on some things. But this is a very neat project to be doing and going through.

TIM: Well, I’m glad you’re doing it, and it needs to be done. It will help you and will help us too.

JEFF: Yes, thank you.

TIM: Sure.
Interview with Reverend Tommy Taylor  
Conducted in office at London Bridge Baptist Church, Virginia Beach, Virginia  
July 21, 2009  

JEFF: I’m here with Brother Tommy Taylor. Brother Tommy is it all right that we record this interview?  

TOMMY: Certainly.  

JEFF: Well, why don’t you share what was going on nationally in the Convention. Because I think it was ’79 when Brother Adrian Rogers was voted in finally as President. So there had to be stuff going on even before that. But then as you know, as I already know that it takes a while to transfer through the trustees and on the different boards.  

TOMMY: Yes.  

JEFF: They are nominated for so many years and only serve twice. I think they told me it’s like until 1988 before they had the first conservative board controlled. But there were things that were happening in Virginia as a reaction to the national resurgence. Because it wasn’t until ’93, that was in January 28th at Old Forest Road Baptist Church that you voted to be a fellowship, the SBVC Fellowship.  

TOMMY: Yes.  

JEFF: Why don’t you share with me from prospective what was going on in light of the resurgence and then also in the state that helped lead to that fellowship?  

TOMMY: Sure, I came from Kentucky to Virginia in the spring of ’79, but there had been back in Kentucky, in Louisville, a meeting, a grass root meeting of pastors lead by some national leader or two coming in to tell that someone had figured it out that by electing a SBC President over a period of years turn the Convention around, trustees, and that whole process. So then I came to Virginia, which I soon discovered was the most liberal, liberal state in the Convention, and then got involved in what was a fledgling movement here. And so you just quoted time at Old Forest Road where we voted to become a Fellowship. And I was involved there and I was elected President of the Fellowship at that time. And then I served for maybe a couple of years and then later, I think Bob Melvin followed me. Bob’s with the –  

JEFF: Or did Howard Baldwin?  

TOMMY: Bob Melvin, I believe.  

JEFF: Okay, Brother Bob.
TOMMY: Yes, I think so. And in turn somewhere along there a vote was taken to become a separate State Convention, which was the first time that that had ever happened.

JEFF: Yes, that’s exactly right. And I’ve got the dates down here for us to talk about later.

TOMMY: Sure.

JEFF: What were some of the things, or conditions, or some of the hot buttons that were going on that even lead to ya’ll forming a Fellowship?

TOMMY: Sure. Well, your annual state meetings we felt more and more disenfranchised and in fact that was one of the last things that was mitigating factor. The BGAV voted to change the giving requirements before you could actually be able to vote as a church.

JEFF: So this affected messengers?

TOMMY: Yes, exactly. So that was sort of making it pretty plain that we weren’t going to be able to change their direction and in turn we were being, as I say, disenfranchised. Before that it was abortion, homosexuality, women’s role in ministry.

JEFF: And inerrancies in scripture played a part in that too?

TOMMY: Oh, yes, right, right. Because that’s what opens the door for these other issues to become issues. And so, we just felt like that rather than expending precious time and energy that didn’t seem to be going anywhere that it would best for us and best for those who chose to send in the BGAV. Because there were a lot of good folks then and now, and so we made the decision.

JEFF: Well, what were some of things that drew ya’ll together even, even, because you really started fellowshipping before you even voted to be a fellowship? Some of the others have told me, and this might spark some of the thoughts.

TOMMY: Yes.

JEFF: Was that we just started, you know, T.C, T.C. Pinckney was very instrumental, and as a lay person, calling pastors and, and told them about getting your full slate of messengers, and before the Convention you all started having a fellowship.

TOMMY: Yes.

JEFF: And your own Bible Conference.
TOMMY: Yes, right, right. And T.C. was a key player and still is quite involved today. But he certainly was, of course he was retired, and he was a leader. He had been an Air Force General, I believe. And so pastors don’t have as much time but, yeah. And so, some meetings were held, and Old Forest Road was, of course, that’s sort of the central part of the state, and so that was why the meeting was held there.

JEFF: Yes, yes.

TOMMY: A chapter you might not have heard about was that as things were coming close, closer to a division, I didn’t, that wasn’t my goal, and I thought well maybe things can be worked out without compromise. And so I called Neel Jones, who at the time was at Columbia Baptist in Falls Church, a large church, and he was definitely in the moderate camp.

JEFF: Yes.

TOMMY: Chuck Colson was a member there, and may still be. Although, I think Chuck Colson has moved. Joe Gibbs went to that church. So, but anyway, Neel, he, he just knew of me, we didn’t know each other. But I called him, and he had a similar concern. So we met in a clandestine of fashion a couple of times at a motel in Richmond, which was about half-way. And prayed about it, and then we talked to Reggie McDonough who was the Executive, BGAV Executive Director, at the time. I remember we met him in Williamsburg and talked. And got together our own version of a peace committee, you know, SBC had a peace committee. In other words I chose about six or eight guys who were conservatives, and Neel did for the moderates, and so we met a few times in Richmond but –

JEFF: Would this be by chance the committee of fifteen in 1993 - or it came to that eventually?

TOMMY: Yes, that sounds right. And in turn –

JEFF: Tried to reconcile, that’s what I have from Brother Doyle Chauncey.

TOMMY: Exactly, and Neel was the leader for the one group and I was the other. And we met and had, you know, a good fellowship. But after a few meetings I was having family issues with a child, and then I needed to be more of a full-time pastor. And so, and I had helped to get that thing started. So one day I told them, I said, well, guys I’m going to have to bail out. I was crying. But it was the Lord’s will.

JEFF: Sure.

TOMMY: And then I think they met two or three more times after that, but there was just no, no common ground. And so it wasn’t with bitterness but there through that period, I sort of got caught in the middle. Where the one side, the conservatives thought I was a
traitor. And so anyway, but I did what I felt was right, and, but we couldn’t avoid the split.

JEFF: Yes. Something that seemed to be another issue and I’m sure if we dug deep enough we could find more. It seemed as if, because I’m going to try to get some verification from BGAV folks, that when the National Convention would go a certain direction with Conservatives, seems like even today, BGAV will do the opposite, like the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, CBF.

TOMMY: Yes, cooperative, yeah.

JEFF: You know they embrace those.

TOMMY: Well, see that, it was just, it got to where it was just such a reactionary thing. Even at our annual state meetings where the conservatives, and we weren’t way out in left field. We were just taking a Biblical position. But because there had already been so much, what’s the word, alienation, and the sides were separating that they would just almost automatically take the opposite side. And, and the same polarization, the same as far as the SBC who was moving toward a more conservative position. And yet the BGAV would react to that. So, we would end up feeling more estranged and shoved out here. So it was, it was, the national issues coming down to the state level. Which was very, very predictable, of course, as you know. Texas since has done the same thing, I guess that we’re the only two conventions.

JEFF: Yes, as of right now.

TOMMY: Yes, and, but it was a good thing and the Lord has blessed our efforts and the BGAV, I mean, I still have friends but –

JEFF: Right. Something that seemed to also be very important was the seminaries.

TOMMY: Yes.

JEFF: You know, Southeastern at the time was very liberal.

TOMMY: Yes.

JEFF: So they were producing many liberal pastors.

TOMMY: Yes.

JEFF: Who in turn, particularly in Virginia and North Carolina who were having liberal churches.

TOMMY: Oh, yes.
JEFF: Many folks in the congregation might not have been liberal, per say, but they were being lead by liberal pastors.

TOMMY: Right, yes.

JEFF: You know, so, you know, from the national level they knew the only way they could take over the education system was to do it through the Department of Presidents. You know, how they appoint to those different.

TOMMY: Oh, yes, I served for two terms as a Trustee. Although it was in the Baptist Sunday School Board, LifeWay, now, and that happened because we were gaining some ground in the appointive process.

JEFF: Yes. Well, in those early days, like in the early ‘90’s what were things that held the group together?

TOMMY: I think just, number one, our belief in Biblical inerrancy and that that settles it. What the Bible says, of course, some things maybe aren’t as clear cut, and some things maybe we need to have more tolerance. But then on some things there can be no tolerance. And so that was at the root. But then that spins off as far as abortion, homosexuality, and you know other things.

JEFF: Yes, yes. I had the question on there but you’ve already answered it about trying to do preventative measures and you already, you know the committee of the 15.

TOMMY: Yes.

JEFF: So, it sounds like ya’ll met a couple of different times, not just one time.

TOMMY: Oh, yes. We meet three, or four, or five times anyway while I was still involved in leadership. And then they met two or three other times, I think afterwards. So it was a series of meetings.

JEFF: Yes. In 19, and I know some these dates from Brother Doyle.

TOMMY: Yes.

JEFF: In 1995, well, I’ll refresh this, in ’92 there was a resolution put on the floor about homosexuality which got voted down. That was in November, the fellowship got formed in January of the next year.

TOMMY: Yes.

JEFF: The following November’s meeting it got reversed. But the fellowship was already established, you know.
TOMMY: Yes.

JEFF: And then in '95 is when they changed the Constitution and By-laws which limited messengers on the giving tracks.

TOMMY: Yes.

JEFF: So, you know, so I know those dates are there.

TOMMY: Right, right.

JEFF: And based on whatever stayed in the state was how your messengers were going to be counted. So that totally shut up the conservation voice.

TOMMY: Right, and that made our decision a no brainer, really.

JEFF: Now, I know there were some even at that right at that point that were ready to start a new convention and some were not.

TOMMY: Right.

JEFF: So you’ve got to about until September, there September 16th, 1996, Grove Avenue Baptist, happened to be there, we voted to be a Convention.

TOMMY: Yes, yes.

JEFF: What was going on when this vote happened with BGAV, Constitution and By-laws changed, limit messengers. What kind of other things were going which finally, people finally decided it’s time to go?

TOMMY: It tipped the scales.

JEFF: Yes.

TOMMY: I don’t know of any particular event. It had just been building up over years and moving in that direction. And so, I think as you mentioned Jeff, the homosexuality vote, and because at about that time the Convention was dealing with the same issue. And I mentioned this in my sermon Sunday, and there were two or three churches down Raleigh area who had accepted practicing homosexuals and they were, you know, just opening the doors. And so at a Southern Baptist Convention meeting sometime along there SBC voted to exclude those churches, you know, from the convention. And in turn we drew the line. And so you look at the Episcopalians and others who haven’t drawn any lines and you can just go in any direction. So it was, the National Convention certainly there were spin-off effects there. But we just felt our issues were more critical than in other states, because we were the first to take the plunge.
JEFF: Right, right. How did they come up with the name, the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia? And what was the reaction? And how, I know when it came, when it finally came to a vote it was like overwhelmingly approved.

TOMMY: Yes.

JEFF: But surely, you know.

TOMMY: We wanted to be sure that they knew we were Southern Baptist, and that we were Conservatives. And then I’m sure some on the other side said well we’re Conservatives, too. But that identified us, SBCV, so.

JEFF: Yes, right now what’s interesting is that, Brother Howard Baldwin when I interviewed him, made the statement he said, what’s interesting now, originally he was not for the name - not that he wasn’t Conservative . . .

TOMMY: Yes.

JEFF: . . . or didn’t, you know, stand for conservative values and Biblical values, he said he was worried it was going to –

TOMMY: To be too inflammatory.

JEFF: Yes, and to maybe chase off some people, some potential people.

TOMMY: Yes.

JEFF: But he said now what’s interesting in all the publications that come out all you see most of the time is SBC of Virginia, which looks like the National Convention. He said, God in his sovereignty kind of.

TOMMY: Has taken care of that.

JEFF: Yes, taken care of a lot of that.

TOMMY: Yes, right, yes, that’s interesting.

JEFF: It’s very interesting. Were you involved at all in the, know anything about the drafting of the Constitution?

TOMMY: I wasn’t actively involved then as I was before when I was President I think I was in a minor way, seems like I went to some meetings.

JEFF: Okay.
TOMMY: Yes, but I wasn’t a major player then.

JEFF: Their purpose statement that they have, the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia a fellowship of Southern Baptist Convention churches cooperating to assist local congregations in their task of fulfilling the Great Commission as commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ.

TOMMY: Yes.

JEFF: Were you, did you have anything involvement in that, did they draft before they became a Convention, or –

TOMMY: I really don’t remember, I just know that I totally agree with that.

JEFF: Yes.

TOMMY: Yes, yes.

JEFF: Now something that we’ve already discussed a little bit, is that, I’ll ask it in a question form. I want to read the first line and I’ll explain a little bit.

TOMMY: Sure.

JEFF: But why was it significant for the SBCV to have such a strong doctrinal position? It’s pretty long because they incorporated the Baptist Faith in Message 2000.

TOMMY: Yes.

JEFF: First line says, we believe that the Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God, and is sufficient as our only infallible rule of faith and practice. Why was that important for them to make a strong statement?

TOMMY: Well, because that was at the heart of our issues and where others had said we believe the Bible contains the Word of God. But you know, you sort of have to hunt those spots. And who is inspired to find the spots where it is inspired and is infallible? You know, that was pretty obvious that that’s why they needed to be very clear.

JEFF: Yes, I’m glad they did.

TOMMY: Oh, yes, because that opens all kinds of doors.

JEFF: Absolutely. Well, one of the things that they had in mind and it kind of took place a little bit later, and might be Brother Tommy after you were heavily involved.

TOMMY: Yes.
JEFF: Was the concept of decentralization, they had that in mind at the beginning but it kind of took place a little bit later. Do you know anything about decentralization, what they were doing, why they did it?

TOMMY: Well, not a whole lot. You know, my friend at Kempsville Baptist, Kelly Burris, have you talked with him yet?

JEFF: Yes, this morning.

TOMMY: Okay, right, well he was involved more so later there at that point, just the bloated, top heavy bureaucracy that teemed, that seems to develop, politics, or government, or wherever. That was the case and so it was a good thing when the state was divided up into these different areas and you had different folks. I mean we’re from Southwestern Virginia, my wife and I, and it’s 450-500 miles from here.

JEFF: Yes, way out there.

TOMMY: Oh, it’s a long way, and in turn, yeah, that was a good thing. And I guess it’s working.

JEFF: I’m, on the up-to-date side, I have had the benefits of that.

TOMMY: Yes.

JEFF: Because being a pastor all I have to do instead of going downtown Richmond, even though I’m fairly close about 45 minutes, all I had to do was call the Enrichment Missionary.

TOMMY: Yes.

JEFF: Or the Church Planting Strategist in my area.

TOMMY: Right.

JEFF: And they would come meet me, or we would meet somewhere for breakfast or lunch.

TOMMY: Yes.

JEFF: And instantly

TOMMY: You were what 50 miles from Richmond?

JEFF: Not even that, maybe 40.
TOMMY: Okay, well you multiply that times 450.

JEFF: Yes. But then –

TOMMY: A lot further for them to come to Richmond.

JEFF: Yes. And then plus there’s a strategist right there.

TOMMY: Oh, yes.

JEFF: So it was pretty neat.

TOMMY: Oh, absolutely, absolutely.

JEFF: And that did away with Associations, you didn’t have Associations.

TOMMY: Yes.

JEFF: That freed up more money actually.

TOMMY: Yes.

JEFF: Because a lot of churches were giving to the cooperative program through the state and then giving “X” number of percentages to the Association.

TOMMY: Yes, and maybe the Southern Baptist Convention can learn from us.

JEFF: It would be nice. They went into this with the concept of the 50/50 plan.

TOMMY: Yes.

JEFF: 50 percent stays in the state, 50 percent goes to the cooperative program.

TOMMY: Are they still there?

JEFF: Yes.

TOMMY: That’s great.

JEFF: Well, you guys had that in mind at the beginning.

TOMMY: Yes.

JEFF: What was ya’lls thinking for that, reasoning for that?
TOMMY: Well, of course, getting the money out to missions, and then the seminaries which they were the battle grounds then. But to increase our support in that direction. And then with the coming decentralization, we would need as much in the state. So, yeah, it was a good thing.

JEFF: One of the things that I just came from Brother Tim Highland, he has a picture, it’s a long picture like this of the convention in Memphis in 1948, and off to the side is a big sign 50/50 by 1950.

TOMMY: Wow.

JEFF: Challenging all the churches, all the conventions to be, state conventions to be 50/50 split. So I need to go back and research a little bit of the history of the Southern Baptist State Conventions when they started. It seems from what I’m gathering that many of them when the cooperative program was started, the encouragement was do a 50/50 split.

TOMMY: Oh, yes, well that’s very interesting.

JEFF: You know that’s very interesting.

TOMMY: Although now not many state conventions are there.

JEFF: Oh, no.

TOMMY: They’re more like 60/40.

JEFF: Yes, yes.

TOMMY: 62/38 or something.

JEFF: And Virginia is even worse as far as the BGAV goes.

TOMMY: Yes.

JEFF: You know, some of their plans are 83/17.

TOMMY: A little spite there maybe.

JEFF: I think Florida is about a 60/40 where I’m headed that way. One thing they, too, with the 50/50 split and this will go into this question, is 50 percent of what is sent in goes off to the cooperative program, 50 percent stays in the state, and ten percent of that, and they’ve kept it that way or even a little less, is administrative. From the get go they wanted to administrative that way. And I don’t know if you knew about those pieces. But 50 percent of what stays in the state goes to church planting.
TOMMY: I did know that.

JEFF: So that is a major thrust.

TOMMY: Oh, absolutely.

JEFF: Why would that be a major thrust for the Convention?

TOMMY: Well, of course, starting more churches is reaching more people with the Gospel and the population is growing in Virginia and all around, and so, yeah, that would be it.

JEFF: Yes, it’s amazing with those kinds of things. Share with me a little bit, because you would have been at least still involved at this point when the convention first started.

TOMMY: Yes.

JEFF: The pick of Brother Doyle Chauncey as Executive Director, what are your thoughts on that, now?

TOMMY: I think primarily it was because he drove a big, old, Cadillac.

JEFF: I’m going to tell him that.

TOMMY: Because I rode with him to many meetings in that big, old, Cadillac. Well, he had a good background, I think even in the business world, but he at the time I believe had been for some years the church financial guy.

JEFF: Yes.

TOMMY: At First Baptist Norfolk.

JEFF: Norfolk.

TOMMY: Which is a large church?

JEFF: Yes.

TOMMY: And just, you know, a good personality, good people person, and yeah, so we, he just seemed to be a natural for the position, because he had been involved for some time, and he was a conservative.

JEFF: Yes. His personality, Brother Doyle, he’s very good for the position, too.

TOMMY: Exactly.
JEFF: He’s not so easily, he’s not hot-headed, he’s not

TOMMY: Right, right.

JEFF: You know he’s a very disarming kind of man.

TOMMY: Yes.

JEFF: Which has been very good.

TOMMY: Yes.

JEFF: It’s obvious looking back now God has blessed in a lot of things. This year makes 13 years for the SBCV.

TOMMY: Okay, yes.

JEFF: We celebrated, we did the big ten year celebration. I think one of the annual meetings was here, I remember the long green.

TOMMY: Oh, yes, that was a few years ago.

JEFF: You know, I remember coming to Virginia Beach and staying here, and coming to the church. What are some of the things that stand out in your mind, and they maybe from the early years, that were some key things, that, you know, it was obvious that God was at work, and they stand out as, "Wow look at what God did!"

TOMMY: Well, the unity that we had, there’s, I’ve heard something about the phone booth days, that you could put us in a phone booth. I don’t think it was ever quite that small. But just the unity of purpose and conviction, that was the main thing that we had going for us. In turn the road was bumpy and rocky at times. But we pulled together and the Lord blessed and of course, this is coming on forward. But then some of the larger churches in the state, First Baptist Roanoke, First Baptist Norfolk, and others, some who were dually aligned, and there are some still dually aligned. They have come into our camp. And we’re of course the recognized convention by the Southern Baptist Convention, they still work with the BGAV.

JEFF: Yes. Bureaucracy is not going to give up money.

TOMMY: In other words you got it, you got it.

JEFF: Even though the SBC is brought back to the conservative roots, you know, who knows if the day would ever come when they would say, BGAV we’re done with you.

TOMMY: I don’t think that will happen.
JEFF: I don’t either.

TOMMY: No, no.

JEFF: I’m not going to put this down in my notes because I’m recording right now.

TOMMY: No, no, I would agree. So the Lord has blessed.

JEFF: Let me ask you this; were you there the night, the napkin, when they wrote the first budget on the napkin in the restaurant, was it a Shoney Restaurant or something?

TOMMY: I don’t think I was there.

JEFF: Brother Kelly was there, you know, and Brother Doyle of course was there. And Brother Doyle always said that same he wished that he had that napkin, you know.

TOMMY: Right.

JEFF: But I have the record of it.

TOMMY: We can start a museum like the Catholics have.

JEFF: We’ll have relics.

TOMMY: Yes, relics, and maybe before it’s all over, Doyle could reach sainthood.

JEFF: Yes, you know. Well, it was the first budget was 75,000.

TOMMY: Yes.

JEFF: And this past year it was 10.3 million.

TOMMY: Right.

JEFF: You know, that’s a God thing.

TOMMY: Oh, yes.

JEFF: You know and it’s every year, even though this past year it was a little, little bit more with the economy the way it’s been, but every year that has grown beyond the budget.

TOMMY: Yes.

JEFF: The projected amount.
TOMMY: Right and Jerry Falwell, of course, it was a good thing when he and Liberty came on board. And of course David Jeremiah’s church in California, that doesn’t affect us but they joined SBC.

JEFF: I didn’t realize, I did not realize that.

TOMMY: Yes.

JEFF: Shadow Mountain.

TOMMY: Oh, yes.

JEFF: Community Church, I did not realize that.

TOMMY: Two or three years ago.

JEFF: I know he’s been a speaker at the National Convention.

TOMMY: Yes, but his church joined, so the Lord’s been good.

JEFF: Yes.

TOMMY: Worth the scars.

JEFF: Yes, going back to Liberty, and I can always put this on pause, because somebody is trying to get you.

TOMMY: Well, I have another appointment coming up here in a little bit, that’s what I was checking. Yes, I’ve a few more minutes; let’s see what time it is.

JEFF: Well, Liberty, I’m the beneficiary of it, finished my Masters through the scholarship through the SBCV with Liberty, and now my Doctorate through Liberty. I was sharing with your staff member, you know, that’s been a full-ride except for technology fee and books.

TOMMY: Wow.

JEFF: I have SBCV and Liberty to thank. It’s incredible.

TOMMY: Oh, yes.

JEFF: You know for me to be able to do that.

TOMMY: Oh, yes, because education at graduate levels is very expensive.
JEFF: Extremely expensive.

TOMMY: Jerry, big heart, and done a great work, and his sons are doing well now.

JEFF: Well, is there any other thing Brother that you can think of that might be beneficial or other things that you can think of that might be, that took place, that were instrumental because I’m done with questioning.

TOMMY: Sure. Well, at the time, I probably, this is more personal, but I’m very conservative. Fact is, the sermon I preached Sunday I got more comments about it, but I talked about our President some but not about political issues but homosexuality and abortion and other things that we cannot be silent and be true to God’s Word.

JEFF: Yes.

TOMMY: So, but I think a time or two I was seen in the mist of this, little as sort of a maverick, in terms of this peace committee effort. But I felt it was the right thing, and again, key people, key conservatives they served. So, you know, it was, and then this has nothing to do with anything but T.C. Pinckney and I, once when I was having some real problems in the church here. It was, well, I knew T.C. so that might have been part of the reason. I was checking out of that leadership program a little early, that committee, had a men’s Bible class of older men and they were just a church to themselves, I mean, it’s a long story. But they were about to get me down and you know business meetings and parliamentary procedures and all that.

JEFF: Oh, yes.

TOMMY: And so I called T.C. just for some encouragement, a little wisdom, and told him the situation, and he said well, Tom, of course he was a fighter pilot, he said well, Tommy, in military leadership we learned this French phrase that was very helpful to us. I said, oh, and he shared the French phrase which interrupts, “Don’t let the bastards get you down.” And that’s not normally in my vocabulary.

JEFF: Yes, yes.

TOMMY: So it was encouraging at the time and I have never quoted him other than in private. So he and I were close, and we send the money, and we’re getting ready to send him some more money for the Banner.

JEFF: Yes.

TOMMY: But when it came time for the SBC election a few years ago, it was the convention to be held in Orlando, and Fred Wolfe was the convention, the movement, the conservative movement candidate. You know, because for all of those years behind the scenes our candidate was picked and sort of pre---
JEFF: Right.

TOMMY: Pre-crowned, but I knew Jim Henry had served First Baptist Orlando pastor. I had served with him some, and I got his newsletter and I knew he was conservative. But he was just a little, not so abrasive, and not so battle oriented. Some folks, you know, time I think to lay the sword down for a while. Of course, T.C., you know, that’s how he made his living.

JEFF: Right, right.

TOMMY: War and killing people. And so we were, I don’t know if we were working on the Constitution or By-laws at the time or what, but I was still in leadership so T.C. and I disagreed publically before the Executive Committee or whatever, because, I mean, it was always, you know, lock step with him. I said, well, I don’t agree this time, I think Jim Henry would be better for us. I was afraid the conservative movement was becoming too much of a movement.

JEFF: Unto itself.

TOMMY: Unto itself, absolutely.

JEFF: That’s a good point.

TOMMY: Yes, and I didn’t think that was healthy. And not a matter of compromise on doctrine, so we disagreed, and I talked to Jim Henry somewhere along there. Of course, Jim got elected being in Orlando that didn’t hurt him. But we were at that convention and the conservative convention, conservative leadership they had reserved a big hotel ballroom and everything for Fred Wolfe’s coronation. And so that’s just on the side, but again I did what I felt the Lord leading.

JEFF: Well, I want to thank you for granting me this interview. This will help me tremendously this earlier stuff that we talked about.

TOMMY: Filled in a few blanks.

JEFF: Yes, absolutely, everybody’s putting, filling a different blank, which is really good.

TOMMY: So, you will then, Jeff, when you get whatever you get.

JEFF: When it’s finished, when it’s a finished product.

TOMMY: Yes, send us a copy.

JEFF: I will, I am sending everybody that I interview a copy, a personal copy.
TOMMY: Yes, because that will be interesting reading for us.

JEFF: Absolutely, thank you Brother.

TOMMY: Sure.
JEFF: Let me ask you this before we get rolling; is it okay by you that we tape this interview?

D.B. Oh, sure.

JEFF: Okay now we can forget that that’s there.

D.B. I understood that you were going to do that.

JEFF: Yes, we can forget that’s even involved.

D.B. Right.

JEFF: Tell me about some of the stuff you've got first.

D.B. Well, I was, I was in all the meetings, not all the meetings. I wasn’t in the phone booth.

JEFF: Oh, okay.

D.B. I heard them talk about the phone booth.

JEFF: You came when it expanded; right.

D.B. I didn’t come until ’90.

JEFF: Okay.

D.B. But I was at the, I came to all the BGAV meetings and I saw the trouble we were in. But at this ’93 meeting I was there and I got there it was overflow, it was full up in the Sanctuary, it was overflow, and I was in the overflow. But they had a –

JEFF: Screen.

D.B. A screen, a T.V. set and we could see everything. And I took notes on it and I wrote it all up. I was, I had been asked to be kind of information for our Association and the Natural Bridge Association. And I guess I was the only pastor in our Association that was in it, you know. And so I took this all down and I was going to write it all up and send it out to the pastors just so they could have first-hand knowledge. Well, I sent it to T.C., and I said T.C. is this accurate would you just look it over and see if I missed
anything, because he was pretty much in charge of that meeting, he called it to order. And then they elected Bob Jackson as the moderator, but he called it to order, as it says right here. And so I took it and I sent to him just in an e-mail copy. And he wrote back and said that is very good, in fact it is so good I would like for you to let me use it as the lead article in the Banner. I said, sure. I think there were a few little figures or something that he gave me.

JEFF: Sure.

D.B. And I wanted him to do that, you know. But it was mostly my article, and that was this article, the beginning article for the, for that, now there was a lot that happened before that.

JEFF: And that’s where I want to go because there was stuff going on nationally.

D.B. Yes.

JEFF: Everybody that I’ve interviewed, this is the 11th interview; I’m filling in different bits and pieces.

D.B. Yes.

JEFF: Nationally before 1979 when Dr. Adrian Rogers was elected President of the SBC, nationally.

D.B. Yes.

JEFF: Now there were things happening nationally that the BGAV reacted to.

D.B. Oh, yes.

JEFF: State wide, you guys had to deal with, now before you became a fellowship. So what were some of things, dynamics, going on that you remember?

D.B. Well, I do remember this, and I’ve got this written out because I did it for a church where I was pastor. This was a document that I made up in 2001 that I gave a little bit of history, no that’s not it, but I’ve got it here though, somewhere, that’s not it. This is just mimeographed or copied sheets, oh, here it is I think. I was pastor from 2000 to, I know I brought that.
JEFF: All right, let me pause it here.

D.B. I was pastor and they were considering coming into SBCV. And I attended all the BGAV meetings, state meetings. But in ’76 I had been elected President of the Indiana Chapter of the Southwestern Baptist Seminary Alumni in Indiana. I was there. And I went to Southwestern Seminary and I saw, I visited classes. I saw that it had gone downhill even from when I was there. I finished in ’63 you see. And so I gave some history on that and how the national resurgence and that’s all right here.

JEFF: Okay.

D.B. And, but then it happened, and this is what I want you to see. This is what you were talking about. In the 1990 BGAV annual meeting, new state budget plan for physical ’91 was introduced. Before that they kept 64 percent in state and gave 36 percent to the Executive Committee, SBCV.

JEFF: Right, the Cooperative Program, okay.

D.B. In ’91 and I was at this Convention it was introduced that they would cut, that they had World Missions I, and World Missions II, you know about that.

JEFF: Yes.

D.B. The Virginia Plan, this Plan only sent 17 percent; they cut it in half, more than, almost in half, no more than half, 17 percent of the Cooperative Program going beyond Virginia’s Southern Baptist Mission causes. The other 19 percent was designated like it went to, some of it went to CBF, some of it went to American’s United, I think is one of them, or Baptist United for, you know, and it was a bad group.

JEFF: And then also was it at this time when the Richmond Seminary started?

D.B. They were started. And for example, I got that right here.

JEFF: Okay.

D.B. In 2001 of the Virginia Plan of BGAV they said they believed the Bible. But they cut it, and this is the documentation, the Virginia Plan of BGAV in the current 2001 state budget if it is reached will only give 45,360 to be shared by all six of our Southern Baptist Seminaries while 420,000 went to Richmond Baptist Theological Seminary. And the Richmond Baptist Theological Seminary was abortion neutral, homosexual friendly, 60 percent women, you know.

JEFF: Yes.
D.B. And many of the liberal professors that left southern seminaries came to Richmond.

JEFF: To form that one.

D.B. Yes, including, well, I won’t go into that anymore. But it was just very, but that shows in comparison of how much in that budget that they gave to all six seminaries. Less, about ten percent of what they gave to one.

JEFF: And you pulled this from their documentation?

D.B. Yes, I pulled it; yes, I pulled it from them.

JEFF: From the Books of Reports from those annual meetings?

D.B. Yes, the Books of Reports. And I went over with T.C. as well before I printed this. And so that’s one thing. Now what else do you want. I’ll give you this if you want it.

JEFF: Yes, absolutely.

D.B. This I made up to hand out to my church members. I don’t have another copy of it.

JEFF: Well, before we go today we can print another copy right here, okay?

D.B. Okay. And you can get this off the archives.

JEFF: Yes.

D.B. This was a classic article I think you want to read.

JEFF: I can get anything with the Banner from Brother T.C.

D.B. Yes, right, right. And this was an article I read. We had Blue Ridge, where is it. Well, that’s not, why don’t you just ask me questions.

JEFF: Okay. Well, let’s go back to, bring us up to what you were touching on with this, big time, things that were going on in the state many times were a reaction to what was going on nationally. There were things that conservatives cared about and the inerrancy of Scripture being one, things that led to where somebody like T.C. played a major role in this. Because I’m already finding out from other men had to get you together, you know what I’m saying?

D.B. Yes.
JEFF: And so fellowship started before the fellowship was formed. So tell me about, you know, how that got going cause then I’ve been told about we had a Bible Conference before.

D.B. Well, my, in 1990 the Southern Baptist Convention was in New Orleans and that was the last year that the liberals ran a President. They quit after that, they didn’t even come to the Southern Baptist Convention meetings. So by ’90 they surrendered as far as the nation is concerned but not as far as the states. And they continued to operate CBF organizations and others in all the states they could, you know. Big time in Virginia and North Carolina, and Texas those were the big, big, CBF, states, you know.

JEFF: Yes.

D.B. And the CBF just met last week, you know, $400,000 less on their budget last year.

JEFF: I don’t even keep up with them.

D.B. What?

JEFF: I don’t even keep up with them.

D.B. Well, what I’m saying is they’re going downhill.

JEFF: Yes.

D.B. Interesting thing Dan Vestal, the Executive Director for that, when I was at Southwestern Seminary I had gone to Pascal High School which there on, I don’t know if you’re, you didn’t go to one of our Southern Baptist Seminaries?

JEFF: Liberty.

D.B. Liberty, well I went to Southwestern Seminary, but I had come from Fort Worth and I went to Pascal High School, in my second year in seminary they still had Bible in the high schools in ’60. I taught Bible in Pascal High School. We had an hour of Old Testament survey, hour of New Testament survey, and it was a conservative manual, Bible believing. And then in spring fruit basket turnover, the Old Testament survey took New Testament; the New Testament survey took Old Testament. I had about 30 in each class, it was an hour. Dan Vestal was in both of my classes. He was a student in Pascal High School. Then he went to Baylor. Now he was an Evangelist and he preached revival in our church. His dad, Dan, Sr., was an old fashioned revivalist, Evangelist, full-time Evangelist. A great man, I’ve heard him preach.

JEFF: Hell fire and brimstone kind of preacher.
D.B. Absolutely. But I mean he was good. I don’t mean he was just a

JEFF: Right.

D.B. And he would turn over in his grave, you know.

JEFF: So this guy, his son, that’s leading the CBF?

D.B. That’s right.

JEFF: I did not realize that.

D.B. And I didn’t do a good job of anchoring him. But, yes, I know him well. And I kept up with him in the early years, but he went to Baylor four years and then he got a Masters at Baylor, and Baylor, I finished Baylor, and I knew Baylor, they had some liberal teachers there. They had some of them were good, and I chose just the ones that were fairly conservative. But then I came to Southwestern, but he went to, he came to Southwestern but by the time he got to Southwestern it was getting more liberal and he got his doctorate at Southwestern. And the Grad School was most liberal, that’s where the liberalism was more at Southwestern was in the Grad School more than it was in the M.D. program.

JEFF: Undergrad?

D.B. Yes, but this right here I wanted you to see by ’96 all the seminaries had changed Presidents except Golden Gate, they had changed Presidents. And all these new Presidents in 1996, the six seminary Presidents signed a covenant pledging to only recommend to higher seminary professors who believed in a perfect Bible and the SBC Doctrine affirmed in the Baptist Faith and Message. And my, I was there and wept. I was so thrilled with that. And so the seminaries had a 90 percent change in faculty most of the professors at our seminaries went to either Baylor and they call it truant seminary there, or they went to Richmond, or they went to one of the other grad schools of colleges that they called seminaries. But they are not prospering.

JEFF: Right.

D.B. Most of them aren’t because they don’t have the money. They can’t compete with seminaries that pay as much as we pay to our seminaries. And they just don’t have that kind of money.

JEFF: Yes.

D.B. And the churches aren’t willing to give them that kind of money.

JEFF: I’m grateful.
D.B. But that’s in here but by ’90, ’92, ’93 national convention was in good shape.

JEFF: Well, ’93 was the actual birth of the fellowship, so all of this, all these combined led to . . .

D.B. Well, you see before I wrote this article and this was in, this was in, let me see what issue this was, the cover is not here, this was in ’95, I believe, and at that time, yeah, September ’95 was not in favor of it becoming a convention and I told them why in here.

JEFF: Yes.

D.B. In my assessment, Jeff, and I say right here, that at the Southern Baptist Convention my assessment was that, that the BGAV meetings were composed of the strong, pro CBF and the strong anti-CBF. And the middle conservative just didn’t show up. And that’s been true ever since I’ve been in the state. A lot of good, God-fearing, Bible pastors they just didn’t go to the National State Convention. They were intentionally ignorant. If we could have gotten the middle conservatives, then I think we could have carried it.

JEFF: Well, isn’t that what T.C. tried to do, he tried to rally.

D.B. Sure he tried, we all tried to rally.

JEFF: Get all your messengers, your full-slate of messengers.

D.B. But they just didn’t show up, they just said I don’t want to get into the politics, you know.

JEFF: Yes.

D.B. And that was and so what happened I still wanted to try to appeal to them, I tried, I would talk to Bible believing pastors, I said, I told, I would explain this. I said the Convention is exposed of the hyper-liberals and the hyper conservatives, and the middle Bible believing pastors aren’t showing up, if you would show up we could carry it back. We could take it back in the National Convention. But what happened is in, you know, when they changed the vote. When they changed and of course I changed my mind and –

JEFF: I got it right here, Brother, I know what you’re looking for.

D.B. I changed my mind and I wrote the other article.

JEFF: In the November meeting in 1995 BGAV made a Constitutional and By-law change with those giving programs.

D.B. They only recognized messengers for what they gave to Virginia.
JEFF: Yes.

D.B. And so many of our conservative churches were giving 80 percent to the Executive Committee of their Cooperative Program amount.

JEFF: Actually it was 83.

D.B. Yes.

JEFF: They were giving 83 and 17 they reversed it because you showed in there they were trying to keep 83.

D.B. Yes, yes.

JEFF: And 17 –

D.B. But what happened was they got punished for that you see.

JEFF: Yes.

D.B. And then they didn’t have messengers. Before it always has been, always had been. And I’ve been in, I’ve pastored in seven states, and I’ve been on the Executive Boards, in almost all of those states except Texas, and I was there. I went to State Conventions but I didn’t serve on any Texas boards. But when Pennsylvania, South New Jersey organized a state convention I was on the Constitution Committee, and it was quite an interesting experience. But at any rate I changed my mind and now why I believe SBCV should become and you’ve got that in there if you’re interested.

JEFF: Yes.

D.B. Why and –

JEFF: So between, so we know it became a fellowship, we know these issues were going on.

D.B. Yes.

JEFF: And there was a Bible Conference related to, you guys put on before the annual meeting, each time.

D.B. Yes and it was good.

JEFF: You know, and you –

D.B. It was the life of me.
JEFF: And you finally voted.

D.B. The only thing that made the State Convention worth going to.

JEFF: Here’s what Brother Doyle shared with me. Back in ’92 Annual meeting, which happened in November, a resolution was put on the floor about homosexuality, and it was voted down.

D.B. Yes. That’s all in here.

JEFF: Oh, great. And then in January.

D.B. I was there.

JEFF: Of ’93 was when ya’ll voted to be a fellowship.

D.B. That’s right.

JEFF: Now they reversed it Brother Doyle told me in the next meeting but that was . . . you guys had already been like, "Hey you guys already done the damage."

D.B. It was, it was damage control.

JEFF: That’s right.

D.B. They were bleeding, they didn’t really reverse anything. They just said well, what do we have to do to keep you guys, you know, because they recognized that they were going to lose a lot and they did lose a lot. They had, they had to really dismiss a lot of their staff, you know. And they cut their budget because they lost a lot of churches, you know. And now, I don’t know, you should know this, I don’t know the current figures I’m not keeping up with it that much, but I believe that SBCV with less than 600 churches give more to the Cooperative Program than BGAV does.

JEFF: That’s correct.

D.B. Yes. And I’m not sure the total giving is all, because they still let people give to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and Annie Armstrong, that all goes to Southern Baptist.

JEFF: Right.

D.B. So for several years the Cooperative Program was more but the total giving was still more by BGAV because they got 1400 churches. They got almost three times as many as we do. I don’t know what the figures are. What do we have now?
JEFF: We’re getting close to 600.

D.B. Yes. And SBCV was still claiming like 1400 or something like that.

JEFF: Yes. BGAV you mean.

D.B. BGAV, what did I say, BGAV.

JEFF: That sounds right. I’ve not gone back into their records yet.

D.B. There used to be 1500 and of course Southern, SBCV, the gluer of SBCV is early on and you should get this, you’ve probably gotten it, early on in our meetings we clearly all agreed we would not try to take BGAV churches. And we encouraged everybody do not try to take BGAV churches, in the first place, it’s a real job cleaning them, you know.

JEFF: That’s right.

D.B. Start new churches.

JEFF: Right and we’re going to come to that question. So in ’93 –

D.B. And we all agreed on that and, we encouraged one another do not try to influence. Now, when I went to, I led two churches to come into SBCV but I was pastor there.

JEFF: Right.

D.B. You know that’s different.

JEFF: Yes.

D.B. But I never have tried to get another church to come in. And we just agreed that we wouldn’t. They accused us of doing it, now; we can’t guarantee that none of our members did.

JEFF: Right.

D.B. But we encouraged them not to do it, we really did. Because life’s too short for us to steal churches, you know.

JEFF: That’s right.

D.B. And we started new churches; we started more than 500 new churches. I don’t know what the number is now, not 500, 300 or something like that. What is the number?
JEFF: I don’t know how many we started yet. I’ll be researching that. I’ve been doing these interviews first.

D.B. Okay.

JEFF: But I’m sure it’s well over 100, it’s a lot. September 16, 1996 at Grove Avenue Baptist Church we voted to be a state convention.

D.B. That was it, yeah.

JEFF: What was going on that within that year that finally led to what everybody thought it’s time. Now is the time?

D.B. Well, I’ll tell you what happened, after that decision right here in ’95.

JEFF: Yes.

D.B. It took all the wind out of ours sails. And that Fall, was that in ’95?

JEFF: It was in ’95 Doyle told me, November, the November meeting of ’95.

D.B. I think I was trying to think we had our meeting before BFAV or no they met before we did I think. I believe they met before we did.

JEFF: What I want to say the records –

D.B. And at the next BGAV meeting hardly any of our guys showed up. I meant it was terrible. I mean, we didn’t even have any resistance, you know. And I said we’ve lost it. We’re not going, we have, this ruined our whole crusade, you know. And so I think a lot of guys gave up. I think T.C. was there, I was there, there were a few others, but most of the conservatives stayed home. A friend of mine, Phil Day, he’s very ill now, but he was very involved then. He said any time I had to go to a BGAV meeting I have to take Alka Seltzer with me. Okay next question.

JEFF: Well, was there anything that ya’ll tried to do to prevent the separation, any ideas towards split?

D.B. We fought that but we lost.

JEFF: Well, did you try to get, well, was there any communication or trying to get together with leadership in BGAV, with SBCV fellowship leadership? I’ll stimulate your brain. There was, you may not have been in on this, but there was a committee of 15.
D.B. Yes, there was. And it was supposedly appointed with an equal number on both sides and some neutral ones in the middle. But it never was, it never did favor conservatives. There were some good men on it like Charles Fuller and at that time –

JEFF: Brother Kelly Burris was on it.

D.B. Kelly Burris was on it, there were some good men on it, but they were outnumbered. And the fact was there was an effort but I don’t think it was a sincere effort. In my article on why should conservatives not go in, I quoted some from that meeting. And why it should, right here, I did, on the . . . let’s see if I can find it, I refer to that meeting about some quotes of the current President of the BGAV and its somewhere in here. I can’t –

JEFF: Did you put it in quotes?

D.B. I got a call from the President of the BGAV, and oh was he steamed. He was mad at me.

JEFF: Oh, he had read this, ...?

D.B. He had read it, yes. I think it’s in here but I can’t see it right now. But I think you want to get to –

JEFF: It’s one, some say Southern Baptist, that’s a quote, I’m trying to see where you had some, if you actually quoted.

D.B. No, let’s see, I wonder why I believe SB should become a convention. I thought it was in this article. But the President of BGAV –

JEFF: Was that John Upton at the time or was it a different guy at that time?

D.B. Upton, yes, Upton, he was the worse one just about. You know about him?

JEFF: Yes.

D.B. But you know who I’m talking about?

JEFF: Yes.

D.B. Yes, I had some quotes from him, one of them which was in that meeting of the Peace Committee. That’s what they called it from the National. And, but I don’t see it here, I was looking at it this morning and I did see it.

JEFF: It might have been a different article.
D.B. Might have been a different article, I did some writing. And it was, I’m pretty sure it was in this particular article but I don’t see it.

JEFF: Well, we can find it.

D.B. It had to with he said that the, he said that the Southern Baptist Conservative leadership and the present leadership of the nation, National Southern Baptists were Satanic. Did you get that quote?

JEFF: No.

D.B. That was a quote from that meeting. A friend of mine told me. He said that and too I got another guy confirmed it. You know, two witnesses. He denied it, he denied saying that. And he, but he printed in the State Baptist Herald.

JEFF: Religious Herald, yes.

D.B. Religious Herald, he printed in there that we did not want to be like the Southern Baptist. And I thought sure it was here. It must have been in another article. But this is, I think this end it’s just one page.

JEFF: Yes, that’s all it is.

D.B. You’ve got, you’ve got this, but it’s in the article. I have the quotes of Hopkins, and then what he said in the Religious Herald, which I got. And I quoted the page number in the quote, he said, “We, not only do we not want to support Southern Baptist, we do not want to be like Southern Baptist.” And I, he called me, and here’s what happened. He called me, he said, “I am Southern Baptist.” I said, “Brother Hopkins,” I said, “May I ask you a couple of questions?” He said, “Sure.” I said, “Do you use Southern Baptist literature from the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board?” That was before it was changed. He said, “Yes.” “Did your church give anything to the Annie Armstrong Mission Offering this last year?” “No.” “Did your church give anything to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Southern Baptist International Mission or what was then called the Foreign Mission Board?” “No.” I said, “Does any of your Cooperative Program go to the Executive Committee to support Southern Baptist Seminaries or Southern Baptist causes?” “No.” I said, “Brother you are not Southern Baptist.” He said, “I’ve been a Southern Baptist all my life.” I said, “I don’t care, you’re not Southern Baptist now.” Because the only thing that makes us Southern Baptist is your connectiveness to Southern Baptist. You can say you were born a Southern Baptist, but you aren’t Southern Baptist now. What could he say? And that was true, and he admitted it. He admitted it, and yet at the Convention, and I was at the Convention when he was elected by acclamation without another nominee.

JEFF: Oh, man.
D.B. And they all knew where he stood. He had been very outspoken on it. They elected him by acclamation, not another. They nominated him and someone immediately moved that nominations close and he be elected by acclamation. And many voted against him, but it was still acclamation because there wasn’t another nominee. Most people just didn’t vote because they had enough votes to approve the acclamation motion. They didn’t need to vote on a negative. You see what I’m saying?

JEFF: Yes.

D.B. I mean he could say, "All opposed." But it was, by that time when he was elected, the Conservatives, a lot of the Conservatives had given up. They had just stayed home.

JEFF: Okay, well, how did they come up with the name Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia?

D.B. Well, that was something the Executive Committee worked on a lot, and I was not involved in that name.

JEFF: Okay.

D.B. Because that was done basically before the organizational meeting in ’93.

JEFF: Right.

D.B. And I was attending meetings and writing articles, but I was not involved in the Administration leadership, you know. I was not on the Executive Committee at that time.

JEFF: Right.

D.B. Not until later on.

JEFF: One of the reasons I’ve got you here today is this next question.

D.B. Okay, the Executive, the Constitution.

JEFF: Constitution, yeah, you know.

D.B. Well, we’ll deal with that then.

JEFF: I wrote here, what process did the group use in drafting the Constitution? But just tell me how you guys, I think Jess Jackson, who passed, was part of that.

D.B. We ordered Constitutions from many states, and we compared State Constitutions of other states, and that’s one of the things we did. And one of the things that I was
particularly concerned about, and that I stood alone for and I think that’s what, I won’t say alone, but hardly anyone else would stand with me. The problem is when the Fellowship was started and I speak of this in the article on, “Why not?”

JEFF: Okay.

D.B. The article on, “Why not organized at this time?” let’s see, I had it here somewhere. Yes, not yet?

JEFF: Yes.

D.B. Here’s, here this paragraph right here. It does not seem to me that SBCV as presently constituted could even be called a State Convention. My understanding is that only churches may form and affiliate with the State Convention. Jesus only established a church and the church is the base of authority, see. And the, only churches may form and affiliate with the State Convention. Initially there was no suggestion that churches elect messengers to form SBCV. In none of our meetings did we have messengers, not one. That disturbed me because then it becomes a society and not a State Convention. A State Convention must be based upon the authority of the local church electing messengers to represent them, you see. And the SBCV Constitution adopted in ’93 stated that any, quote, and this is a quote, “Any Cooperative in Southern Baptist Churches desiring membership in this body shall petition the Executive Committee and least three months prior to the body's annual meeting.” Part B says, “The Executive Committee will present all applicant churches to the next annual meeting with an affirmative or negative recommendation.” But nowhere does it say anything about electing messengers, see. We didn’t have that, and that was before I was on the Constitution Committee. All churches receiving through, and then it says, has very similar guidelines, for individuals affiliating. Individuals could join this convention. And that’s not true in Southern Baptist Convention, that’s not true in one State Convention. Not one State Convention had a provision for individuals joining the convention. That’s the, now American Baptists have that? It’s more of a society. And for individual affiliates which I believe should be deleted, and that was the issue. Have any churches elected messengers to SBCV? I never found any evidence that any churches elected messengers. We had a problem in that we were not; we were the only State Convention that was going along this line. No other State Convention allowed members.

JEFF: But when you wrote this article it was still a fellowship.

D.B. That’s right.

JEFF: Okay.

D.B. But I say we got to solve this problem before we become a State Convention.

JEFF: Problem first, okay.
D.B. That was one of the major reasons I said we got to solve this first.

JEFF: Yes.

D.B. What happened was though we had some wealthy men and I could give you some names, but I’m not going to.

JEFF: Don’t, yes.

D.B. We had some wealthy men that were in these churches, and we needed their money. And so, I had several people that were fighting me on this, forget it. Well, I’ll tell you what happened, we struggled with this. We met in the Constitution Committee meeting. I made my case, and some of them saw my point, but they just didn’t want to fight the battle, you know. And what happened here is that after this I believe the Lord gave me a way to work through it so that we could without having a major, you know, shoot out. The Lord gave me a sundown clause, really. And the sundown, you know what a sundown clause is?

JEFF: I do not.

D.B. Okay. A sundown clause is you get this but you make up in such a way, you write it in a such a way that I think in three years or two years that those would automatically be deleted. And I worked hard on this, got it written, and we put it in. And we had the Executive Committee meeting, and the Executive Committee meeting could not approve it. And as it was structured our State Constitution, the Constitution Committee, reported to the Convention, not to the Executive Committee. The Constitution Committee was not under the Executive Committee. So we went to this Executive Committee, and probably a majority of the Executive Committee didn’t want to fight the battle. And they said call a special meeting and it was at the Northside Baptist Church in Lynchburg and Doyle was there, of course Jess was there, and the committee was there. And we had one other one who was an attorney. He was one of the ones whose church was not in it. And he’s my friend, and I’m not going to call his name but he, his church later did come in, it was First Baptist Church of Roanoke. And they didn’t come until after Charles resigned. I think just before he retired they came in.

JEFF: They came in, yes.

D.B. They came in dually aligned and then after the new pastor came in they came in.

JEFF: Uniquely.

D.B. Yes.

JEFF: Yes.
D.B. By the way, I knew Charles Fuller I went to Seminary with him. And when he was struggling with whether to become the Executive Director of BGAV. He came and made a special trip to Roanoke and said please don’t leave us. The Baptist Church of Roanoke was the top Cooperative Program giving church in the whole State Convention. Please don’t leave us he said. He told me this, he said, “I’m not leaving you.” He told us in a group of pastors, he said, “I’m leaving you, you left us.” You left Southern Baptist and I’m Southern Baptist, but BGAV had supported him with scholarships to go to school and to seminary and so-forth. And he was, he felt like he just couldn’t, but finally he did. He said what I believe is more important than that, you know. But at any rate so what happened is we put that sunset clause in.

JEFF: Yes.

D.B. That at this section on individual membership would automatically be deleted without any further vote, I think in three years.

JEFF: So it went through that way.

D.B. It went through that way, and when it, the next, the three years later by that time First Baptist Church was in, he was qualified. There were still a few, but they moved their membership because they recognized that they couldn’t continue to support something that was liberal, you know.

JEFF: Yes.

D.B. And but it really wasn’t.

JEFF: Well let’s go back to how you were forming this. You got other State Convention’s documentation.

D.B. Yes.

JEFF: You were bouncing back and forth.

D.B. Right.

JEFF: You had a committee of men with you.

D.B. I did just try. Really, I was on the committee as representative from the Seven Central Steering Committee.

JEFF: Okay.

D.B. And they put me on there; I was by virtue of my position. I was in a delicate position because as an ex-officio member I was no voting member of the committee, see.
But I had had a lot of experience. I probably had more experience on state constitutions than they had, you know. And I still had my Pennsylvania-South Jersey State Convention documents, you know, that we had struggled with. But it put me in a delicate position, and some Executive Committee meetings were as a member of the seven. I was automatically on the Executive Committee that year. And we had some discussion and I just told them, I said, "If we do this we’ll be the only State Convention that is a society and not a State Convention." I gave them the historical basis, you know.

JEFF: Right, right.

D.B. That Southern Baptists always believed that the local church is the authority for everything that we do. Jesus only established the local church. He did not establish State Conventions.

JEFF: Right.

D.B. He did not establish societies. He established the local church, and the local church sends messengers, and we have done that.

JEFF: Right.

D.B. Now in the new Constitution it clearly set out messengers be elected in the proportion of how they can do it.

JEFF: So when.

D.B. It is so fuzzy for us on the individuals. How do you determine how many you can have?

JEFF: When did we, when did SBCV vote on adopting that Constitution that ya’ll drafted?

D.B. ’96.

JEFF: And so it was in ’96.

D.B. That was the organizational meeting.

JEFF: So when we had our meeting there Grove Avenue Baptist.

D.B. That was done there.

JEFF: Okay. So you all's work, I know that they probably polished up some after that.

D.B. After that, there were continual revisions, and it has been changed a lot since then.
JEFF: Yes.

D.B. Ten years, you know, or eleven years.

JEFF: Thirteen this year.

D.B. Thirteen, yeah, that’s right this year. And, but meanwhile all that problem was solved. We just had to wait a little bit. And it was okay.

JEFF: Yes.

D.B. And now, what happened was after we got organized then T.C. Pinckney, he may have told you this, I mentioned this yesterday to you, that they invited T.C. Pinckney to come and meet with them when they were forming the Southern Baptist of Texas, a conservative group there. And they learned a lot from us, you know.

JEFF: Yes.

D.B. And they got our constitution and they got all, a lot of documentation from T.C. And they’re doing great. They’re ahead of us now.

JEFF: Yes.

D.B. They’re ahead of us in membership. They’re ahead of us in giving even though they started when we did, but they had a bigger State Convention.

JEFF: Right.

D.B. And they had more to draw from. And they’re still growing by leaps and bounds.

JEFF: Well, Texas takes up half the country anyway.

D.B. I’m a Texan.

JEFF: Texas is so big. Well, even beyond the Constitution did you have any input in like the purpose statement and things of those natures?

D.B. I was involved in some of that but frankly most of that, I’ll tell you what most of that, Doyle was so good at this.

JEFF: Yes.

D.B. He was, he’s been so, he’s been such a, he’s done such a fantastic job.
JEFF: Well, I was going to ask that question later. But why don’t you touch on that. One of the questions I had was not only was how Doyle chosen, how did ya’ll get led to Doyle?

D.B. Kelly was the man to ask about that.

JEFF: I already did and Kelly was the one that said God just laid it on his heart and he went and told Doyle.

D.B. I think it was Kelly mostly. Kelly has been –

JEFF: Well, tell me about what Doyle has meant to the Convention, his expertise.

D.B. Well, in the first place, he has, he’s highly trained in accounting. Before he went to seminary he was an accountant.

JEFF: C.P.A. I believe.

D.B. Yes. And an Executive Director is basically the Treasurer. Now that didn’t mean he did it all, but he done beautifully. And I was on one the first Finance Committees of the State Convention and he would come with his notes, and he would lay it out and man he was, he was just a genius.

JEFF: But he, did he not serve as Treasurer for several years for BGAV?

D.B. Yes, he did, he did.

JEFF: Yes.

D.B. I’ve never had anyone that I felt, and plus he’s also been very conservative, evangelical, and he’s just been what we needed, no question.

JEFF: One of things going in—

D.B. And I’m not reflecting on Jeff, the new one. I think he’s doing a great job, too. But, Doyle was the one we needed.

JEFF: Right, right at that time.
And Kelly was the one, he was the one. He was here, he was here in this area, he knew him, he, see also –

JEFF: Because Doyle was at First Baptist Norfolk.

D.B. He was at First Baptist as Associate Pastor and Administrator.

JEFF: Yes.

D.B. And he did a fantastic job there. He was there when Ken Hemphill was there.

JEFF: Right.

D.B. And he did a great job there. Plus he’s been pastor of other churches in the State.

JEFF: Well, when the Convention started they went into the idea of this 50/50 giving plan.

D.B. That’s right, and we’re still there and I’m so proud of that.

JEFF: Well, why was that so important?

D.B. One of the reasons it was important is because what we talked about is that our convention should not be a bureaucracy. It should be lean and mean and should only have that which is designed to be Great Commissioned, you know.

JEFF: Yes.

D.B. And we just didn’t set up a lot. We didn’t set up any hospitals. We didn’t set up any colleges. We didn’t set up any of those institutional type things. Emphasis was on the local church and on evangelism and providing training and equipping for building churches. And the rest should go to the Southern Baptist Convention.

JEFF: Yes.

D.B. And see where BGAV was cutting their Executive Board portion all the time we said we want at least 50 percent. And that’s been a great cooperative program promotion, you know.

JEFF: Yes.

D.B. But okay.

JEFF: Okay, here’s what we’ll do in wrapping this up.
D.B. Okay.

JEFF: What are some things Brother that says, "We’ve been around for 13 years?"

D.B. Yes.

JEFF: Give me a couple of highlights of what you think God has done over the life of SBCV.

D.B. Well, I think that, as I said a moment ago Doyle Chauncey has been such a gracious gentleman, and he has related to people well. And even though he is conservative, he has not wanted our State Convention to be so fundamental to be isolating ourselves. And frankly and I don’t know whether I should say this, but he was in favor of saying, de-emphasizing the word conservative.

JEFF: Yes.

D.B. You might have picked that up somewhere.

JEFF: And Brother Howard Baldwin was, too.

D.B. Yes.

JEFF: You know they were just worried about.

D.B. Because all the word out there is that they are just a bunch of fundamentalists, you know.

JEFF: Yes.

D.B. Well, that doesn’t bother me a whole lot because I think we needed some fundamentalism, you know.

JEFF: Well, state some of those other things in your mind that impressed you with what God has done.

D.B. But I think the decisions that were made regarding, not criticizing BGAV, not trying to steal churches. Just focusing on planting churches and evangelism and missions, and mission trips; I think that’s been the genius of it.

JEFF: That’s awesome. Brother I want to thank you for your time.

D.B. Yes.
JEFF: And coming to meet me, and let me interview you. I might call you on the phone now and then as I’m starting to write.

D.B.: You got my phone number.

JEFF: Oh, yes.
JEFF: I’m here with Brother Bob Davis; Brother Bob is it okay that we record this interview?

BOB: That will be fine.

JEFF: Okay, and at any time we can forget that that’s there, and we can just talk.

BOB: Sure.

JEFF: What I’ve got here is I want to go back to what was happening nationally. We don’t have to go to super in-depth, but what happened nationally impacted how BGAV reacted nationally.

BOB: Yes.

JEFF: So share with me some of things that were going on whether it be theologially, politically, whatever, from your perspective that happened nationally. I’m trying to get us up to when the actual formation of the fellowship took place in ’93 here in Lynchburg at Old Forest Road Baptist Church.

BOB: Right.

JEFF: So share some things, and what was the reaction here in Virginia with Conservatives, and those types of things.

BOB: Okay. Nationally we were struggling for many years with theological education. The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, with the Christian Life Commission, with the International Mission Board, which was the home, or the Foreign Mission Board, and the Home Mission Board, all of those, we had difficulties and problems. The biggest problem in my estimation was with our seminaries because they were training the men that were going into the churches. Probably the biggest difficulty that we had was at Midwestern and Southeastern. And the reason those were the greatest difficulties was they had more liberal theologians there and teachers than anybody else. New Orleans and Southwestern, had a mix and primarily Southwestern was solid. The reason was Dr. Robert Baker was the President there, and he was relatively careful about who became a professor there. New Orleans seminary probably was next as far as being sound, so the other four though there were problems that weren't very serious. So when the turnaround took place we had conflict more at the other seminaries rather than Southwestern and New Orleans. And the major conflict was at Southern, Midwestern, and Southeastern. The Christian Life Commission, they were involved in matters that are unbiblical and
unscriptural. And they were supporting things that we would object to scripturally as far as moral issues are concerned.

JEFF: Like what kind of things?

BOB: Well, homosexuality, they didn’t take a stand against it. They didn’t take a stand against abortion. They were not really strong pro-family life. And the Baptist Committee on Joint Affairs would not take a stand on prayer in schools, they were against it.

JEFF: And this was national?

BOB: Yes, nationally. And they—

JEFF: Is that today the ethics, the Religion and Ethics Committee?

BOB: Yes.

JEFF: Okay.

BOB: Totally opposite.

JEFF: Alright. So it would have been the same committee but it got renamed?

BOB: Got renamed, well no, no, it was replaced.

JEFF: Okay.

BOB: See the Baptist Joint Committee is still in existence, but Southern Baptist don’t support it any longer.

JEFF: Okay.

BOB: And also we had a problem with the WMU and still do. And we need to deal with that, and eventually I believe we will.

JEFF: Yes.

BOB: And coming back to Virginia, when I came to Virginia in 1967, I came and pastored at Calvary Baptist Church in Concord. When I came in August, July rather of ’67, that Fall I went to an annual meeting of the Baptist General Association of Virginia in Richmond and I was disturbed by what I was hearing there. And the biggest thing that I objected to was, and I didn’t know exactly what was going on, there was a man in the back who was taking young people and sending them forward to speak on issues that I felt should have been dealt with. But they were speaking the total opposite of what I felt like they should be saying about the issues. And we were dealing with many things.
JEFF: And this was in ’67?

BOB: In ’67.

JEFF: Wow.

BOB: So in ’68 I went to my first Southern Baptist Convention. Well, through the process I learned this man was Dr. Robert Alley who was a professor. And is a professor at the University of Richmond. He is a very, very extremely liberal man. And these were students from his class. And when they would go forward and speak, and if they did well, he would give them an “A”. And he was somehow out in the churches getting them made messengers. So the second thing that happened was I went to a conference at Eagle Eyr and it was a good conference up to this point. We went in for the general session where they had the worship time. A man by the name of Dr. Henry Turlington, who had been dismissed from Southern Seminary, was pastoring at North Carolina. He was speaking, and he said I don’t understand why the feeding of the 5,000 is such a big issue. After all we all know that it was the custom in that day for everyone to carry their lunch in their pocket. And all they did when the little boy came up, and Jesus said okay let’s have a blessing. He blessed the food. And they all took their lunch out and ate what they wanted and then they gathered up what was left. And I’m sitting there shocked as a strong conservative, came out of our most conservative seminary, and alumnus of Columbia Bible College, believing the Bible is absolutely without error, and this man is denying the truth of the scripture. And so I really didn’t know what to do. I was shocked. Today, I probably would stand up and say hold it, hold it. But then –

JEFF: How old were you back then?

BOB: I was 32 years old.

JEFF: Wow, okay.

BOB: And –

JEFF: I was five.

BOB: You were, right. So I got the Religious Herald which still goes out, and Robert Alley’s father was the editor.

JEFF: Yes.

BOB: He would do book reviews, and he reviewed a book by Dr. W. A. Criswell called “In Defense of the Faith.” And he criticized that book because he was defending the inerrancy of the Scripture and truths of the Gospel. So I wrote him a letter and told him I was disappointed. I disagreed with what he had said, and etc.
JEFF: Yes.

BOB: So I left the state and went to pastor in Maryland and Delaware. And then in 1974, I felt led to go into evangelism. I came back to Virginia. When I came back to Virginia I realized what I was coming to. I realized there was a great need here for evangelism. That’s the reason I felt led to come back to Virginia. So I came back and when I did after a while as time moved on things began to get worse. We started a meeting of just a handful of people. Art Ballard was the leader.

JEFF: Yes.

BOB: We met in Lynchburg. We were a very loose group. We fellowshipped and tried to deal with things on a state level. We made very little progress. In fact, Art was shouted down at times and criticized. I was personally attacked. They said things to me they shouldn’t say to a Christian. They never used a curse word, but they used words that were just as bad to criticize me because I was taking a stand for what was right. And along the way T.C. came on the scene, and some others came, but they joined in later. The original group was very small. We were meeting in different places.

JEFF: This is the phone booth group that we hear about so much.

BOB: Yes, that’s right. We were the little group. So we were junking around with what to do. One meeting we thought to start a new State Convention. Another meeting well, let’s try to work with what we got, and back and forth. We never could come to an absolute consensus of what we ought to do.

JEFF: Yes.

BOB: So we finally decided that we needed to start an organized fellowship. That’s the Old Forest Road place.

JEFF: Right.

BOB: And we elected people to be on the first Executive Committee.

JEFF: Yes.

BOB: And I was one of those that was elected. At that meeting we elected Doyle Chauncey to be our Treasurer.

JEFF: Yes.

BOB: I nominated him, I contacted him and asked him about it, and he agreed and his pastor agreed.
JEFF: Now we had fun with this when I interviewed Doyle, he said, he says Brother Bob will tell me, he called me, we talked, and I agreed. He said I don’t remember ever agreeing but I got voted in with my pastor looking at me. He said well I guess I’m the Treasurer. He said I was sitting up in the balcony that day.

BOB: He agreed.

JEFF: He told me to tease you on that one when I had the interview with you. He said when you have the interview with Brother Bob Davis you tease him.

BOB: Yes.

JEFF: So that was on January 28th 1993.

BOB: Okay.

JEFF: Is when that happened.

BOB: Alright, that’s probably true.

JEFF: That’s what’s recorded in the records.

BOB: Okay, good.

JEFF: It’s right there.

BOB: Okay.

JEFF: So all this, it started with Brother T.C. You can fill in some of these gaps. It sounds like with his help and some of the rest of you, you tried to go back and get your slate of messengers even before this date.

BOB: Yes, yes.

JEFF: Trying to build that to start coming to the annual meeting. Almost tried to make that shift back to conservative like the National Convention was done.

BOB: Yes. But some of the key experiences that we went through was they changed the way they recognized messenger money.

JEFF: Yes.

BOB: Do you have all that information?

JEFF: Yes, but go ahead and talk about it.
BOB: Okay. Well, they decided that only money given to the general association would be counted, period. So first Baptist Church in Roanoke, we were meeting in Salem. I remember this distinctively, Dr. Charles Fuller, you know of him.

JEFF: Yes.

BOB: Okay. He and I are good friends. And I remember he got up and he said that there was something that was presented in this budget. And he was the largest contributor to the Cooperative Program in Virginia. I guess giving over a half-million dollars at that point, and that was years ago.

JEFF: Wow.

BOB: And he said, "Sir, I’m going to ask you a question," and he said, "All right." "Do you mean to tell me that because of what we have done our students no longer qualify for scholarships?" The guy moderating, I believe was the President, he was hesitant, he didn’t want to answer, and Charles just waited. He finally said, "Yes, sir, that’s correct."

JEFF: Yes.

BOB: That’s how tight it was. So other people were also trying to get this re-enacted like it was before as far as your contributions and they were getting tighter all the time. So they really got in a difficult situation and Charles Fuller didn’t like that. And he went back in his church and began, you know, continued to do some changes as we began to get our group together. That happened before we started our group.

JEFF: Okay.

BOB: We began to get our group together, well, that’s some of what really caused us to get organized finally. We were meeting; we had our own evangelism meeting and all. At the beginning we wanted to cooperate with the general association and have the evangelistic meetings together - Evangelism Conference. So Howard Baldwin was the, at that time the Acting Interim Director.

JEFF: Right.

BOB: Which was really not officially elected, just kind of like an interim type thing?

JEFF: Right, that’s right.

BOB: And I was the evangelism and we met with Danny Aggie, do you know that name?

JEFF: Yes.
BOB: Okay and with Reggie McDonald in Salem.

JEFF: Okay.

BOB: And I said Reggie and Danny, and Howard wasn’t doing hardly any talking at all. We want to cooperate and have an evangelism conference together, and this will show you how they positioned themselves against anything else. I said all we ask is we don’t ask that they declare openly inerrancy and infallibility but they believe in the total inspiration of Scripture, and no women preachers, and that they be Biblical preachers. Can we work on that basis and choose people together and agree on it, and we will share 50 percent of the cost. Now, Reggie McDonald you don’t know him, do you?

JEFF: No.

BOB: Have you met someone you felt like was a major political person?

JEFF: Oh, yes.

BOB: He was the major.

JEFF: Yes.

BOB: He talked about 30 minutes about nothing.

JEFF: Yes.

BOB: I said Reggie let’s go back to what we were saying, and I repeated what I said. He said, well, he talked about another 30 minutes. Finally, after about an hour and a half, I said Reggie and Howard hadn’t hardly said a word, Reggie and I talking, Danny hadn’t said anything hardly. I want a yes or a no are you willing to abide by these? He said, "I want to tell you something." I said, "What?" "Nobody will ever tell us what to do."

JEFF: Yes.

BOB: I said, well, thank you. That was their attitude.

JEFF: So you guys then were having, the fellowship seemed to be growing just of –

BOB: Yes, yes, it was growing.

JEFF: You know the Banner started in ’88.

BOB: Yes.

JEFF: So, at least you had a voice out to the people.
BOB: Yes, and we had a voice before that.

JEFF: Okay.

BOB: Art Ballard put out a paper.

JEFF: Okay.

BOB: It was primarily through his newsletter.

JEFF: Alright.

BOB: And he did have information he sent out.

JEFF: Okay.

BOB: And T.C. picked up on that.

JEFF: Okay, great. So where’s Brother Art Ballard now?

BOB: He’s with the Lord.

JEFF: I thought that was the case.

BOB: Yes, he died in Croatia.

JEFF: Okay.

BOB: He was over there doing mission work.

JEFF: I thought that was the case. I hadn’t asked some of the others to verify that.

BOB: Yes.

JEFF: I knew you would know.

BOB: Yes, He was my pastor for a number of years. So, we began to do our evangelism conference, and secretly the North American Mission Board, who was the Home Mission Board, was not supposed to cooperate with us because of their identity to the Southern Baptist Convention and we were not a Convention. But Larry Lewis, who I know, I called Larry, I said, "Larry I want somebody to come from the home mission board to preach at our evangelism conference." He said, "Well, I can’t officially do it." But he said, "I'll have somebody come just between you and I." And they paid for it. So we were getting cooperation and that was good.
JEFF: Yes.

BOB: And I wanted all of our Presidents at our seminary to come because they were now conservative.

JEFF: Right.

BOB: So I had –

JEFF: You had Brother Paige come one time didn’t you?

BOB: I had Paige come one time, and I had Al Mohler come one time. And I had what’s his name from Midwestern. I’m trying to think of his name, but any how he came. And these guys all came and preached. And then I had Dr. Criswell come and preach.

JEFF: You had Dr. Adrian Rogers come.

BOB: Yes, that was later.

JEFF: Okay.

BOB: That was later.

JEFF: Okay.

BOB: This was before we became a convention.

JEFF: Okay.

BOB: And I had these people come and preach, and it was a great blessing. We had hundreds of people there. We had a good meeting and I didn’t go to the other meeting. But they, Charles Ward, at the First Baptist Church, who was Charles Fuller’s right-hand man, told me that he went to one of their meetings over there and they had about 50 people.

JEFF: Yes.

BOB: They weren’t, they’re not evangelistic. Why would they go to an evangelism meeting? So, we then, you know, eventually became a convention. So, when we voted to become a convention, we needed an Executive Director.

JEFF: Right.

BOB: So we had a lot of names, and Kelly Burris was the chairman of that committee.
JEFF: Yes.

BOB: And I said, "Kelly." I was on the Executive Committee, we were meeting at the International Mission Board Center in Rockville. I said, "Kelly, you don’t have enough names to consider." He said, "What are you talking about." We were in a parking lot. I said, "Doyle Chauncey is the man." "Well, why is Doyle the man?" I said, "Well, number one, he has a theological degree from Southwestern, he has pastored, and he has started a church, and he loves the Lord. Secondly, he is a C.P.A., he’s knowledgeable about finances, he has been the business manager at First Baptist Church. Now tell me who better could fit what we are looking for?"

JEFF: Yes.

BOB: "Yes," he said, "I didn’t know all that." I said, "That’s true, you all need to consider him." He said, "I’ll call him and get a resume." So, that’s who we called.

JEFF: Yes.

BOB: Doyle said, "Some days I thank you, some days I don’t."

JEFF: Well, one of the questions I had because you’re leading up to all of this, was that choice of Doyle, looking back now, how has that panned out?

BOB: It could not have been any better in my estimation. I’ll give you some reasons. I know all the area directors and all the people over there pretty much even though I don’t go over there. I’ve been in the office probably twice in my whole life. I’m not an office hanger outer over there. But I know Steve Bradshaw really well, and I know Don Cox and all these other guys. And he created a system there that I’ve never heard of. They discussed and made decisions together under Doyle’s leadership, before the Executive Director dictated. Now, this put all these spiritual minds together. I asked Doyle one day, I said Doyle if you have a conflict, you know, divided, and can’t really decide what happens, he said, "I decide." Well, that’s the way it ought to be. I thought it was great. The second great thing he did was he created a new relationship with the churches. Before the resource people lived in a central area. Every state, you know, they’re near Raleigh in North Carolina. They’re, Richmond, here.

JEFF: And Jacksonville, Florida.

BOB: But there he developed this concept of sending the directors, the people with the resources, the resource people, out where they lived. That’s the reason we have Steve Bradshaw here, and you know these guys out here where you live. And they’re right there with you, and they understand the community, and they know the pastors. And Steve is a great pastor to people.

JEFF: Yes.
BOB: He really takes care of his people.

JEFF: The question I was going to ask of you, see you’re covering a lot of ground which is great because they call it decentralization.

BOB: Yes, yes, that’s right, that’s exactly what it is. But the concept that only a skeleton group be in a central place was Doyle’s idea and it was great.

JEFF: Yes.

BOB: And thirdly, Doyle has to my knowledge a really good relationship with people throughout this state. I’ve had very few people say anything critically about him and when they did it was unfounded. And he just did an outstanding job.

JEFF: He has a very disarming personality.

BOB: Yes.

JEFF: You know some of us; I kind of tend to be this way. I see myself like you’ve got old Bob Melvin home with the Lord.

BOB: Yes.

JEFF: You’ve got Brother Johnson, David Johnson, T.C. Pinckney; I mean those are good fighting, fighter kind of guys.

BOB: Yes.

JEFF: Doyle can come into a room and kind of disarm everybody, you know.

BOB: But he will –

JEFF: But still stand on the truth.

BOB: That’s right he’ll take a stand, he’ll take a stand. Well, you know, in the initial beginning we had to have fighters. We had to have fighters.

JEFF: Brother Tommy Taylor I already met with him.

BOB: Yes, Tommy.

JEFF: Yes.

BOB: Tommy took a stand. Tommy was one; well we’ll start a convention this week, no, the next time, no we don’t need to start one. I said Tommy make up your mind.
JEFF: Well, let me ask this question.

BOB: Sure.

JEFF: Before the vote came which was in September at Grove Avenue Baptist Church in ’96, let me pull it out and give you the actual date. Its September 16th, we voted to be a convention.

BOB: Yes.

JEFF: Before that date was there anything to try to reconcile with BGAV?

BOB: Oh, we had tried, and we had tried. I just gave you an example of the evangelism.

JEFF: Right.

BOB: That was their attitude.

JEFF: Well, let me throw another one at you. Do you remember the meeting of the 15? You weren’t part of that were you?

BOB: No, I was not.

JEFF: Kelly was, I talked with Kelly.

BOB: Okay.

JEFF: Brother Doyle reminded me to just ask different people about the meeting of the 15.

BOB: Yes, I was not.

JEFF: The new editor of the Religious Herald, Jim White, he was part of that. See I’ve already written them, him to ask for permission to research some of the old archived, Religious Herald.

BOB: Okay.

JEFF: And he was very gracious to me. And he reminded me and told me I just wanted you to know I was part of the 15. So I probably will pick his brain a little bit too from the other side.
BOB: All right.

JEFF: That will be interesting.

BOB: That’s for sure. I would say without qualification or without a doubt we went way beyond what was necessary to try to reconcile.

JEFF: The question that I’ve heard from many of you it was never our intention to become a state convention.

BOB: No.

JEFF: That was furthest from our minds in the beginning.

BOB: We wanted this convention to be Biblical in its makeup and in its function.

JEFF: Well, let me ask you this. How did the name come about, Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia?

BOB: Nobody told you that.

JEFF: Well, I ask everybody that. I like to get the –

BOB: Okay, okay. We were at a meeting at the Learning Center and they said well we need a name. So everybody started talking. Well let’s everybody write a name down and then we’ll, so we all wrote a name down. Then we began to share the names you know. Well, what do we want this to say? We want it to say that we’re Southern Baptist and that we’re conservative and that we’re in Virginia. So that’s how we came up with, you know, our convention name, SBCV.

JEFF: Yes.

BOB: So it was a natural once we began to get really in our minds how we wanted to be identified. You know the Texas Convention those two are so close it’s hard to know the difference when you see them here you know.

JEFF: Right.

BOB: It is clear.

JEFF: What was the reaction, because I do know some people at first even though they were conservative, were worried that the term conservative was going to, you know, either chase off some people or some people won’t join because of that. How was that, you know?
BOB: At the meeting I don’t remember anyone that strongly objected to it. And out in the public nobody, you know, out in the meetings of the churches, nobody objected to me.

JEFF: Right, okay, I’ve not heard of that.

BOB: As far as I was concerned it was accepted.

JEFF: Yes, Brother Howard told me, he said, "At first, I was worried about," he was my first interview. He said, "At first I was worried about it. " He said, "I’m conservative, and I’m all for it." He says, "At first I’m kind of like, you know, I wonder what this is going to do for more people coming on and that kind of thing". He said, "Looking back now at a lot of publications, nearly all you see is SBC of Virginia." So, it looks like the national name attached to Virginia. He said, "You’ve got to open up and see our documents to see that it stands for conservatives.

BOB: Yes.

JEFF: The Lord in his collective wisdom for us, you know, just came up with that name.

BOB: Yes.

JEFF: I found that very interesting.

BOB: Yes, well, I like the name, I’ve always liked it.

JEFF: I love the name.

BOB: I do too, it’s great.

JEFF: Were you involved in any facet of the drafting of the Constitution?

BOB: Only by, see we had a guy that did that. I’m trying to think of his name.

JEFF: I got him.

BOB: Posted over in Virginia Beach.

JEFF: D.B. Martin and Jess Jackson.

BOB: Jess Jackson was his primary guy.

JEFF: He’s passed.

BOB: Yes, I didn’t know that.
JEFF: Yes, he’s passed, because I interviewed Brother D.B. Martin.

BOB: Okay.

JEFF: And he was part of that group.

BOB: Yes. Jess was the Chairman of that committee.

JEFF: That’s correct.

BOB: And he would bring drafts for us to look at. So I was a part of that.

JEFF: Okay.

BOB: In reviewing it and making suggestions, and I think we got a good document.

JEFF: And over the life of SBCV we’ve tweaked certain areas as we’ve grown.

BOB: Sure.

JEFF: And had to, I mean you’ve been to the meetings, I mean it’s like going to revival.

BOB: Yes.

JEFF: It’s awesome being at the meetings.

BOB: Yes, I tell people in other states that and they look like, "No, that couldn’t be."

JEFF: It’s actually business sprinkled in amongst singing and preaching.

BOB: Yes.

JEFF: It’s wonderful.

BOB: That’s right, absolutely.

JEFF: They had, they have a purpose statement that apparently came pretty early. That when you go on the website this purpose statement is there, let me just read it. And, you know, I just want you to just respond to it or tell me how did that come about. It’s very simple. “The Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia is a fellowship of Southern Baptist Convention churches cooperating to assist local congregations in their task of fulfilling the Great Commission as commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ.” How did the organization arrive at that purpose statement?

BOB: Same way we got our name.
JEFF: Okay.

BOB: We, I remember we met.

JEFF: So this is a different meeting than the one out in Rockville?

BOB: Yes, yes. See we were, we were trying to get everything in line, and we wanted people to know who we were, and we wanted an organizational name. So we did it the same way. We would write out what we felt like we were about. Then we would combine it, and they would, you know, clarify it, and we would edit it, and finally we came up with this statement.

JEFF: Okay.

BOB: So it came about the same way.

JEFF: And I think at this time Doyle was involved in too.

BOB: Yes. Well, he was the whole time, from the time we got it organized as a fellowship.

JEFF: Fellowship.

BOB: As Treasurer.

JEFF: Okay.

BOB: So he was there the whole time.

JEFF: Let me go back a second, the year before we voted to be a convention in ’96.

BOB: Okay.

JEFF: What were some of the things that led up to finally the group deciding it’s time. Because even you said a little while ago, you know, like Tommy Taylor. Brother Tommy would go okay it’s time to go. No it’s not time to go. Finally, it became evident that ya’ll decided it’s time to go.

BOB: Well, we looked at it as going in a tunnel, and here’s this broad tunnel, you’re going in, and you see light, and you see things are good. You see that you’re accepted. But it gets more narrow, and you see that you’re about to get cut off completely, yet you want to go through that tunnel. And it comes down so narrow that you can just squeeze to get through. That’s where we were with our relationship to this old convention because we were not allowed to be involved in hardly anything at all as far as being members of any committees. They used make this statement and I always wondered
about it from the beginning. “You only serve in Virginia on a committee or as a trustee if you earn it.” I kept saying, “Well how do you earn this? What do you do?” Well I learned you earn it by being here a long time and being accepted by this small group of people in Richmond. But we were not in the group that was earning.

JEFF: Yes.

BOB: They wanted our money. They did not want us to participate. They didn’t want us at the meeting saying anything. They didn’t want us to take a stand for anything. We had so many issues that we had to deal with. Like right now on the national level in or our government, Obama is doing so many things. I feel like I can’t keep up with it and call my congressman enough.

JEFF: Me either.

BOB: It’s a frustrating thing.

JEFF: Yes.

BOB: Well, that’s the way it was. That’s an illustration of way it was with the general association and us.

JEFF: Well, one issue and we each share a little bit about this, and I didn’t even know about, only one person shared about this, because people have shared the various issues. They said the hospital here in Lynchburg, I don’t know if it’s called Baptist Hospital or not.

BOB: Yes, it was.

JEFF: They have Baptist in the name.

BOB: Virginia Baptist Hospital.

JEFF: And in it they were performing abortions.

BOB: A Baptist hospital of Virginia performing abortions, yes, absolutely.

JEFF: I’ve never heard that before because I wasn’t from Virginia. So I was taken back.

BOB: Yes.

JEFF: I said no wonder you guys had to take a stand.

BOB: Yes.
JEFF: And they weren’t even willing to deal with that.

BOB: Yes, that’s right. Well, that was the Executive Director down there interestingly. So, he told us one day at a meeting, he said, "I really do not want to have abortions performed here, but it’s out of my hands." That’s what he said. I had a document here, if I still have it, which I think I do about Virginia Baptist Hospital. I’m not; I’m not interrupting what you’re doing or anything.

JEFF: Oh, no. Actually we can just put this on pause. Do you want me to do that?

BOB: Sure. To the Chief of Chaplains at Baptist, and that’s Marvin Goal, and I told him, I said, "Marvin I’m disturbed that they’re doing abortions at Virginia Baptist Hospital and the Southern Baptist money is going to support that." And he wrote me back and told me in fact they were doing abortions. He admitted it and tried to rationalize what they were doing. So that is not a, that is not a rumor, that is a fact.

JEFF: Wow.

BOB: And there were nurses there that were forced to be involved in it, and they didn’t want to do it.

JEFF: Yes.

BOB: And some of them left the surgical unit because they didn’t want to be involved in it.

JEFF: Yes.

BOB: So that went on for years and still goes on.

JEFF: And the hospital is still there?

BOB: Yes.

JEFF: Still got the name Baptist in it?

BOB: Yes.

JEFF: Probably funded by the BGAV.

BOB: Now he rationalized and said all the money we get from the BGAV goes into the Chaplaincy program and does not support the hospital. Well, give me a break. So if I find that I’ll send it to you.
JEFF: That will be interesting. The core values; let me give you this sheet so you can see them. Remember the core values they’re here but then the longer version is here.

BOB: Okay.

JEFF: You know, the foundation, fellowship, focus, function, future, do you know anything about how they were developed or came about?

BOB: No, I don’t.

JEFF: Okay. I think Brother Geoff Hammond, Dr. Hammond was a part of that.

BOB: Yes.

JEFF: Then the objectives are not on there when they have strength and support, start, send, dealing with churches.

BOB: Yes.

JEFF: And now we’re getting it condensed down to the three “M’s”. These core values: strength, support, start, and send objectives with Dr. Jeff Ginn is being combined, kind of shrunk down to three.

BOB: Yes.

JEFF: Which is multiplying, maturing, and mobilizing you see on the website. Dr. Ginn was able to talk about those things.

BOB: Can I prophesy a little bit?

JEFF: You sure can.

BOB: I feel like the changes we’re making in the convention right now are going to weaken what we’ve done.

JEFF: Yes.

BOB: Are you aware of what’s going on as far as our Regional Coordinators are concerned?

JEFF: No.

BOB: Okay. We had coordinators throughout the state in different places and like Steve Bradshaw covered Charlottesville, Danville, Lynchburg, and the surrounding area.
JEFF: Right.

BOB: Now he covers Richmond and Lynchburg. Don Matthews covered Roanoke and another man covered South West Virginia. Let’s just take those three areas.

JEFF: Right. They had five, went to seven, we’re back to five.

BOB: Yes. Now, we’re down to four, I think. I’m almost sure we’re down to four. But anyhow, what I got may be wrong, but these are the people I was told to contact. Those are the four people that are the four leaders. They may have gotten another person.

JEFF: Yes, right, well it’s an associate right now, Don Crane. You know Don?

BOB: No. If I see him, I might. Like you.

JEFF: Yes. Well, Don Matthews left. Don and I are good friends we were at Swift Creek together. I was there when Don came on at Swift Creek.

BOB: Okay.

JEFF: When he left you had Don Crane as an Associate training. So Don has kind of picked up that slack in the area that Don Matthews was over, but he’s just an Associate because he’s of retirement age.

BOB: And see that’s what I was getting at.

JEFF: Okay.

BOB: Let me, which Swift Creek were you a part of?

JEFF: The large one where Ronnie Brown is at right now.

BOB: Colonial Heights?

JEFF: No, the one up in, up off of 360.

BOB: Okay.

JEFF: There’s a smaller one down in Colonial Heights, Swift Creek, and then Swift Creek up in Midlothian runs like 1000 on Sunday morning.

BOB: Well, the one at, this very quickly, one of the greatest revivals I ever had was at the one in Colonial Heights. We had tons of people saved.

JEFF: Brother Gary’s there right now.
BOB: I don’t know him. Tommy Davidson was the pastor there when I did the revival there. We had a lot of people saved.

JEFF: That is so neat, so neat.

BOB: I wish they were all like that, but they’re not. But anyhow, here’s the thing that’s going on, and personally I don’t like this. They’ve taken Steve away from us, are you aware of that?

JEFF: You mean, Steve Bradshaw? He is over the church planting area or something.

BOB: Yes. They have these people in Richmond that are going to be, are going to replace Geoff Hammond.

JEFF: Okay.

BOB: And there’s three of them I believe.

JEFF: Right, right.

BOB: Emphasizing certain types of ministries.

JEFF: That’s correct, I’m with you.

BOB: Okay, now, the Regional Coordinators before covered these areas and they were doing really well. Some of them had church planters, some of them didn’t. Some of them had Associates, some of them didn’t. Now, what they are doing is they got these four guys, it’s my understanding, and Jack Noble is going to cover Roanoke, Lynchburg, and Southwest Virginia right now, that whole area.

JEFF: Before it was just Southwest Virginia.

BOB: Who, Jack Noble?

JEFF: Yes.

BOB: No, he had Roanoke and Southwest Virginia.

JEFF: Oh, that’s what he had, okay.

BOB: But in September Steve is leaving here and what I understand from Steve is Jack Noble is going to cover Roanoke, and Lynchburg, and all this big area. And they’re going to have a guy in southwest, okay. They’re going to have a man in Danville. They’re going to have a man in Lynchburg. They’re going to have a man in Charlottesville. They’re going to have a man in Roanoke, Christiansburg, all of these.
But these people are part-time people doing other things. They are not, I don’t want to be ugly, but I don’t know any other way to say it, they are not of the caliber and maturity to deal with pastors that these other men are. We, you know, organizations take up personalities. Since we started here in Lynchburg we were a loose organization. So, we had our meetings it was we’d meet, get our business done, talk, ask questions, all that. Well, Don Matthews came along and Don is a great man, Don’s a friend of mine. He’s recommended me to revivals. He recommended a revival over on the other side of Richmond, New Kent County. Little old church had 70-80 people in it. We had 9 adults saved, huge, big, rough men last year.

JEFF: That’s awesome.

BOB: And that church today in a year runs over 150 out in the county in a year. Now who wouldn’t want to double their membership in a year? That was in one of our papers or Proclaimer. It was in there. I don’t know if you remember reading it or not. But anyhow Don and I are good friends, but Don is a structured guy. And if you wanted to say anything you needed your hand. And it got to the point where one pastor said to me, you’d probably know him if I called his name, I’m not going to those meetings any more I feel like I’m in the third grade, and I got to raise my hand to say anything. And other people were talking to me, and I called Doyle. I said Doyle we got a problem over here. Don Matthews does not fit here. Don’s a good guy, he loved the Lord, he knows what he’s doing, except he doesn’t understand these people. You know we started here and we’re loose. Oh, okay, let me see what I can do. He called me and said, "I got a guy coming, Don’s going over to Roanoke." Well, Roanoke, you ever been to a meeting over there? They go in auditorium at 11:30 or 12:00, I’ve been there, they have a worship service. They’re very structured. He makes announcements. They take care of business. Then they go eat and talk.

JEFF: Yes.

BOB: So now Jeff comes along. Jeff Ginn, Jeff’s a good guy. Jeff loves the Lord. I like Jeff. But I don’t like what they’ve done. I don’t think it’s going to be a positive thing. And again the reason is when you deal with pastors you’ve got to have somebody with some maturity that knows how to handle people.

JEFF: Yes.

BOB: You know what I mean?
JEFF: Yes, sir.

BOB: Here we’ve got Shawn Aims; he’s a young guy down here that was Youth Pastor at Highland Heights. He resigned and went into a ministry in mobile homes somewhere. And we wanted to try to reach these people, which is great. Shawn’s probably I would estimate 30 years old, and here he is dealing with guys my age. And almost every pastor, I don’t know of a pastor here that’s younger than him and he’s going to be the leader. He comes to the first meeting, and he opens this computer up to tell us about what’s coming, you know the coming events. "Most of you aren’t interested in this but anyhow let me show you what’s going on." I’m going, Shawn why are you doing this, son?

JEFF: Yes.

BOB: So now Jack Noble is going to be over this and they’re going to get a guy in Charlottesville, a guy here, and a guy in Danville. But they’re all going to be part-time people.

JEFF: Yes.

BOB: So I don’t like that. In my own estimation it is not going to advance what we want done.

JEFF: Hadn’t, see I’m not into the mix of those kinds of things, you know. But have you expressed that to them, like to Doyle?

BOB: I’ve talked to Steve about it.

JEFF: Steve, okay.

BOB: I’ve talked to Steve about it. Steve is the man. He’s one of the leading men over there.

JEFF: Steve’s a good man.

BOB: I don’t know Jeff. Now another thing is I nominated Steve to be the Executive Director of this state. And the pastor at Colonial Heights called me and talked to me a long time about it. And he said we are considering him, and we believe that he is a good man. Why they decided to go with Jeff I don’t know. Jeff has missionary experience. He has an earned doctorate. He, you know, is not real strongly familiar with our convention. When I looked at Steve I saw a man that was successful in identifying with the people. I saw a man that knew inside and out what we are about. I saw a guy who had pastored here. I saw a man that is a leader like Doyle. He is of similar personality. Do you know Steve very well?
JEFF: I know him well enough. I mean I’ve been around him more than just once. I’ve been around him quite a bit.

BOB: Yes, well, he’s that type leader and I felt like he was a good fit.

JEFF: Yes.

BOB: But anyhow they didn’t go that direction and it may be God’s will that Jeff is the man.

JEFF: Well, let me go on to some of the questions.

BOB: Sure.

JEFF: Because we can turn the tape off and even talk.

BOB: Yes.

JEFF: So all of it is not trapped on tape.

BOB: See I’m giving you this as information if you want to write it down.

JEFF: Absolutely, absolutely.

BOB: Okay.

JEFF: And I will have that. Let me go.

BOB: If you decide to print that, you know Cross Books now has you can get a book printed yourself.

JEFF: Oh, wow.

BOB: You have to pay for it.

JEFF: Wow.

BOB: You want to write that down?

JEFF: I have that information.

BOB: Okay, have you looked it up?

JEFF: I have not looked it up.
BOB:  See I’m revising a book that I’ve written right here.

JEFF:  Yes.

BOB:  I had it printed myself.

JEFF:  Wow.

BOB:  This is my third printing. I’m going to the fourth printing.

JEFF:  Good, good.


JEFF:  I’m going to have more than enough. Let’s see because we will talk about how the limitations are. Do you have a copy of last year’s annual meeting Book of Reports?

BOB:  No.

JEFF:  I’ll try to –

BOB:  They don’t send me one.

JEFF:  Here’s what I discovered. You know they have a strong doctrinal position.

BOB:  Yes.

JEFF:  It’s pretty long because they added, you know, Baptist Faith in Message 2000. I’m going to read you the first line.

BOB:  Okay.

JEFF:  And the question is why is it significant to have such a strong doctrinal position? You already know the answer but I’m asking everybody this, but what I’ve discovered though and I pointed it out to Doyle in my research down at the office there’s a phrase that’s missing from the online version than what’s in the Book of Reports. So I thought the phrase was taken out until I discovered that it had not. The person who typed it into the online to the web page did not include it.

BOB:  Oh, okay.

JEFF:  And I hope it’s by, Doyle was like, uh I hope it’s by accident. The first phrase says, “We believe the Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God.” And the phrase that is
left out, you know that is why I wanted to get it exactly, doesn’t say inerrant, but it says it is without any mixture of error.

BOB: Yes, which is the Baptist Faith and Message.

JEFF: Okay, and something of that flavor, and is sufficient as our only infallible rule of faith and practice.

BOB: Yes.

JEFF: So that one phrase there about having, you know, it’s without, completely without error I think is what it says.

BOB: Yes, that’s the Baptist Faith and Message Statement. Did you know that?

JEFF: Yes.

BOB: Okay.

JEFF: Yes. Why do they have such a strong doctrinal statement?

BOB: Because it is easy for terminology to be misrepresented and misunderstood. Therefore it needs to be as clear as possible, and personally I would like to add inerrant and infallible.

JEFF: Well, we have the word infallible here and is sufficient and is our only infallible rule of faith and practice.

BOB: Okay, good.

JEFF: So they do have that.

BOB: Okay.

JEFF: See, my background has been Independent Baptist to the point of almost legalistic. They use all the words, plenary, you know, infallible, they use all the words when they write a doctrinal statement.

BOB: And at the beginning you might be interested in this and you might not. We had some people who were very strongly of independent flavor even though they were Southern Baptist. They got up and made a motion in Richmond that we adopt the King James only.

JEFF: I have that information.
BOB: Oh, okay.

JEFF: I actually have, when I was going through the records I was giggling.

BOB: Yes.

JEFF: So I actually have that information. From the first actual meeting I have the actual motion that said King James Version 1611.

BOB: That’s right, that’s what they said.

JEFF: It got defeated.

BOB: See, they probably never read one, have you?

JEFF: No, it’s got the Epigraph in it the King James 1611. Has that one got it in? The original one had the Epigraph in it.

BOB: See, when you read that, that’s difficult to understand.

JEFF: Oh, my word, yes.

BOB: Those are still available.

JEFF: I didn’t realize that.

BOB: I keep that for people that say I’m original, you know. I go back to the original 1611.

JEFF: Oh, yes.

BOB: And there it is, read it and tell me you got it, is that it? No, I didn’t know that.

JEFF: So even your version has been revised.

BOB: Yes.

JEFF: You already talked about the decentralization. We don’t have associations because of that.

BOB: Yes, even though we cooperate with associations.

JEFF: Right.

BOB: If they’re willing.
JEFF: If they’re willing, that’s correct. The church I went to Amelia Baptist as Senior Pastor, we were still part of middle district which I didn’t care for. But anyway, from the get-go it didn’t start this way but quickly became a 50/50 giving plan.

BOB: Uh-huh.

JEFF: For somebody, you and I understand what those terms mean, for somebody that doesn’t understand what the terms mean, what does 50/50 mean?

BOB: It means that 50 percent of the money stays in the state to be used on the state level for all of our ministries.

JEFF: Where does the money come from?

BOB: It comes from the churches.

JEFF: Okay.

BOB: Yes. And 50 percent of it goes to Nashville for the Cooperative Program. The majority of that goes to the International Mission Board and the North America Mission Board. And the third area would be the seminaries, and then to the Executive Committee to support the items that we are involved in and the office.

JEFF: Right.

BOB: And the Religious Liberty Committee, too.

JEFF: Yes, what’s interesting is Brother Tim Piland showed me a picture he has in his office. It was the convention. I think it was in Nashville in ’48, and there’s a sign. It’s one of those wide panoramic pictures with all the people in the area, and over on the side is a big old sign that says, “50/50 by 1950.” Meaning they were trying to get all the states to be 50/50.

BOB: And Virginia was getting less and less.

JEFF: Yes, so when you start hearing people say it wasn’t that way from the beginning, that’s not true. It seems by just checking a little bit of history that the people were in the beginning, or the goal was to get back to 50/50 and doing it that way.

BOB: We never did 50/50 before did we?

JEFF: Not here in Virginia.

BOB: Not on a national level, I don’t think any state ever did it.

JEFF: I don’t think so.
BOB: No, I don’t think so.

JEFF: I don’t think so.

BOB: I don’t know of any.

JEFF: I’m going to have to do some; I’m going to have to do a lot of digging because the majority is going to be about SBCV. With the 50 percent that comes to SBCV that they keep, 50 goes on to the Cooperative Program, 50 stays. Of that, 50 percent goes into church planting.

BOB: Yes.

JEFF: Which is one of the five core values?

BOB: Yes.

JEFF: So it must be extremely important.

BOB: Yes, absolutely.

JEFF: You want to talk a little bit about why church planting is important.

BOB: Well, they say more people are saved when you start a new church. I don’t think that has to be true.

JEFF: Okay.

BOB: When you go into a church that already exists if you will emphasize soul-winning and train lay people to be soul-winners you can have a lot of people saved. I came to a traditional church. I’ve been to traditional churches. When I came to Calvary Baptist in a year and half we almost double in attendance and most of those were saved.

JEFF: That’s awesome.

BOB: When I went to Maryland I was in a city where U.S. News and World Report said that city was one of the ten top declining cities percentages wise in the country. I started a soul-winning program there, and we had over a hundred people saved the first year.

JEFF: Yes.

BOB: In a church that was running 200.

JEFF: Yes.
BOB: And 30 something of those the first year were baptized in the fellowship of that church.

JEFF: Yes.

BOB: So today, today pastors are they’re trained in church growth and in-house trying to get people, you know, get out and get the gospel out and all that. But bring them in and, you know, to me when I read the Book of Acts they were out to where the people are winning them to Jesus.

JEFF: Yes, I would agree.

BOB: That’s what this book is about, training people to be soul-winners.

JEFF: Yes, the one that you’re re-writing?

BOB: Yes.

JEFF: You’re updating?

BOB: Yes.

JEFF: I’ll have to get a copy from you.

BOB: Yes.

JEFF: Well, talk, when I turn the tape off, where I’m headed. So, church planting do you want to share anything else about church planting more than that?

BOB: Well, to me church planting sometimes is necessary and needs to be done. We’ve done some of it in my opinion that did not need to be done. There should have been a stronger effort of state staff trying to help pastors get a handle on how to build their churches. And they just go down the road and start another church.

JEFF: Getting the church healthy, back on its feet.

BOB: Yes, yes.

JEFF: Okay.

BOB: And sometimes, let’s face it, they just need to close.

JEFF: Yes.

BOB: Some of them are dead.
JEFF: Yes, as they say in North Carolina, dead, two syllables, they de-ad.

BOB: Right, absolutely.

JEFF: Well, we’ve been.

BOB: I’m for church planting, don’t misunderstand me.

JEFF: Sure, sure.

BOB: But we have a lot of churches that are just not doing it.

JEFF: Right. Over the last, we’re 13 years old this year, so you’ve been even in the fellowship years and before that, but dealing with the 13 years, and you don’t have to give me everything. What are some things that are just stand out in your mind that God did this, look what he has done, the key things in the life of SBCV.

BOB: Yes. Well, I think in the beginning something that the Lord really did was He got us going in the right direction by giving us a leader that knew what he wanted to do and lead us in the right way. He gave us the wisdom to make the right decision about our purpose. To give us a vision and idea of what to name us so we could be identified. And the Lord gave us the wisdom and the opportunity to be inclusive of some independent churches that wanted to be identified with a group but did not really have anybody they felt comfortable identifying with. Like the Tabernacle in Danville, Thomas Road, other churches around that are smaller and larger, none larger than Thomas Road.

JEFF: Yes.

BOB: But other churches that are larger and smaller in the sense of being small to hundreds or whatever.

JEFF: Right.

BOB: And they felt like they could come on board and I think God really did this because of the way we presented who we were and what we were doing. Dr. Jerry Falwell told my former pastor and I, one day, we had not started our convention yet but we were working on it. And we said, "Jerry, when are you going to become a Southern Baptist." We were having breakfast with him. He said, "When ya’ll get back to what you were and get conservative, I’m going to join up." So, we started our new convention. A year or two went by and I saw him one day at a basketball game, and I went down and talked to him, I said, "Jerry." "How are you doing, Bob?" I said, "I’m fine." "I want to ask you a question." "All right." "You told Art Ballard and I when we become a convention you were going to join up, and we are a convention, and we are conservative." "I know it, I know it." "And you said you were going to join." He said, "Well, I didn’t want to join initially because I felt like it would hurt you, but now I’m
ready to join up." So, within a few months he signed the statement and became a part.
That’s a God thing. Because here’s Jerry Falwell who’s an independent background and
Lamar Moneyham, independent background all these guys, you know, and God did that.

JEFF: Oh, yes.

BOB: And they’re a part of what we’re doing. I’ve had the opportunity to teach at
seminary at Thomas Road filling in for some of the guys there. I know Carl Diemer is a
good friend of mine and others. I’ve preached at the Tabernacle meeting and you know
I’ve been around with these guys that were independent before, and they’re really trying
to fit in. Trying to be a part of what we are, and I think God really did that. I praise the
Lord for it. And I believe that the Lord through the wisdom again of Doyle and his
leadership gave us the regional leaders that we needed in the areas where we were and
they really worked well. Everyone that I know of throughout the state as I talked to the
men in the churches were pleased with who they had in their leadership. So, I feel like it
was really, really good.

JEFF: Yes.

BOB: I like the division that we have of our Cooperative Program money.

JEFF: Yes.

BOB: The Lord led us to do that, and I think that was a great thing. And there was, I
remember no disagreement with it. They were on board. And I have just been overall
pleased with all that’s been done to this point. And I’ve already expressed my feelings
about some of the things going on.

JEFF: Yes, yes.

BOB: But anyhow, I just feel the Lord’s really been in this and it’s been really good.
And to have another state call and ask for information about how to start another
convention when Texas started that said a lot about who we were and who we are.

JEFF: And you probably know, I don’t want us to like get into a heavy discussion of
this, but this was prompted from the last conversation with Brother Carl Wiser. He just
came back last week from the Dakotas, you know the Dakota Partnership.

BOB: Yes.

JEFF: Well, the Director out there watched what was going on in Virginia, contacted
SBCV liked what was going on, and made some changes out there. Which some of the
people did not like but is actually going to instead of DOM’s to missionaries and they got
some things starting to happen now.
BOB: That’s great.

JEFF: You know.

BOB: That’s great, yes.

JEFF: That’s one of the reasons some people think; well, that’s why Dr. Diemer, Dr. Towns, different ones at Liberty and SBCV office would like for this to be published.

BOB: Yes.

JEFF: Because it would be a resource for people to say "Hey how did you guys do that?" Well, here you go, this is how we did that.

BOB: It’s good to read history. I’m concerned about the young men today in relation to the Southern Baptist Convention and the SBCV.

JEFF: Yes.

BOB: They don’t know where we’ve been and what we’ve been through.

JEFF: Yes, yes, any final thoughts that you have?

BOB: Not really. In my thinking, I’m glad you’re doing this project. I think it’s needed. It needs to be read. Young men need to know about it.

JEFF: Well, thank you for your time.

BOB: You bet, you bet Brother.
Interview with Reverend Carl Wiser
Conducted in Carl Wiser's Office at Highland Heights Baptist Church, Rustburg, Virginia
July 31, 2009

JEFF: I’m here today with Brother Carl Wiser and Brother Carl anytime there’s questions that we ask that you weren’t part of, "Just say, I don’t know Brother."

CARL: Well, I can tell you that will be easy to do.

JEFF: And we will go from there. You are Pastor at Highland Heights Baptist Church. How long have you been here?

CARL: Fifteen years.

JEFF: Wow. Where did you come from?

CARL: I came from Louisiana.

JEFF: Man, a bunch of the boys that I’ve talked to come from somewhere down south.

CARL: Oh, yes.

JEFF: You know, before you and I moved to Virginia, people were trying to get the state back to conservatives.

CARL: Oh, yes. Well, the pulpit committee here was looking for a conservative Bible believing Pastor, and they didn’t look in Virginia.

JEFF: Wow.

CARL: Because they didn’t think there were any candidates in Virginia.

JEFF: Man.

CARL: So, they searched elsewhere.

JEFF: That speaks volumes.

CARL: Yes, used to, but not anymore.

JEFF: Well, that’s true. Well, did you grow up Southern Baptist?

CARL: No. No, I got saved at 16 in a Southern Baptist Church.
JEFF: Okay.

CARL: I went to a Louisiana College, it was a Baptist College supported by the Louisiana Baptist Convention, just financially, and then went to Southwestern Seminary and did some work at Mid-America.

JEFF: Oh, okay, so when you went over to Mid-America was Jeff Ginn there at the time or had he already moved here.

CARL: No, I didn’t know Jeff.

JEFF: Okay.

CARL: This was back in ’90, ’91, ’92 somewhere around in there.

JEFF: Okay.

CARL: Because I came here in ’94.

JEFF: Well, did you know anything that was going on nationally, you know, with the National Convention back when they voted Brother Adrian Rogers in at ’79?

CARL: Yes.

JEFF: And then the big infamous meeting in ’85.

CARL: Yes.

JEFF: There were things that the Virginia Baptist, the BGAV in a sense was reacting to the national convention.

CARL: Right.

JEFF: And led up to where SBCV finally they started having fellowship meetings and then they had a fellowship that got formed right up here at Old Forest Road in ’93.

CARL: Yes.

JEFF: What was going on nationally that you knew about?

CARL: Oh, I was involved starting in ’82. I knew about it because I graduated from seminary and started my first pastorate in ’80. But in ’82 I began to get really involved. We were part of electing our first conservative state convention President in Louisiana. We had, we did that. I worked with a guy who is now the Executive of the Texas Baptist Convention, Jim Richards.
JEFF: Yes.

CARL: He and I went to college together.

JEFF: Wow.

CARL: And Jim and I are friends. So he recruited me and got me involved. And of course I served on the Board of Trustees at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

JEFF: Well, what was some of the issues going on nationally, you know, with the conservative resurgence, with what they call moderate to liberals. That there were theological issues, there were political issues.

CARL: Well, for us it was a Biblical issue, it was a theological issue, and that was really true when I got to Midwestern Seminary. Because 90 percent of the professors at Midwestern Seminary didn’t believe the Bible was the word of God.

JEFF: Wow.

CARL: I mean we had a guy who left, we fired him. Why he left, we didn’t grant him tenure. So he quit, and he went to teach at a Catholic School. He didn’t believe that if you were a child and you saved and got baptized, “You got saved.” You were Baptist when you got to be 16 or 17, you said you know that wasn’t real. I’m really making, you know, I’m really coming to Christ at 25 or whatever, you know, this is when I really got saved. He said, no use to baptize them again you’ve already been baptized once. That was what hung him with our layman. It wasn’t until our laymen got onboard that we were able to say "No." So it was a theological issue.

JEFF: Wow.

CARL: I would go to meetings, my first meeting at Midwestern, Milton Ferguson said this Seminary will not go the way the Southern Baptist Convention is going. This is not part of the conservative resurgence. We will be what we are and I’m leading this seminary and this is the direction we’re going to go and this is the direction that I’m going to lead it. And the trustees said, "Wait a minute bubba!"

JEFF: And this was at Mid-America?

CARL: No, that was Midwestern.

JEFF: Midwestern?

CARL: Yes.

JEFF: Wow.
CARL: And we said, "No you’re going to go the way that the trustees tell you that we’re going to go."

JEFF: Now Midwestern is located where?

CARL: Kansas City, Missouri.

JEFF: Okay, that’s right.

CARL: That’s one of our six seminaries.

JEFF: That’s right.

CARL: So that solidified for me, and then too we had all kinds of politicking going on. I had our Director of Admissions in our association when I was in Louisiana send letters to my Chairman of Deacons, and the new Director and Secretary and said, you know, come to this meeting, and meet Dan Vestal as he, you know, is running for President of the Convention. And I sat down with him, I said, "Don’t you ever, ever, ever send a letter to any of my people inviting them to hear somebody that I don’t support.” I said, "That’s not what you do with my cooperative program funds.” He did it through the Association. And so it was very much a political thing.

JEFF: Wow.

CARL: And so I went first, I went to the BGAV meeting in ’94 where they voted to change the giving formula. So that you’re giving; your number of messengers to the BGAV was based upon what you gave to Virginia causes.

JEFF: So, let me back up a little bit Carl. You came to Virginia when, here to Highland Heights?

CARL: ’94.

JEFF: In ’94, so that was really your first meeting.

CARL: That was my first meeting with BGAV.

JEFF: With BGAV, because I was going to go back and see how much you knew. Because the little fellowships that formed, and the fellowship that actually formed from Doyle and others I already know that in ’93, actually in ’92. The annual meeting was in November. They had a recommendation to make a strong statement against homosexuality which got voted down.

CARL: Yes.
JEFF: The fellowship got formed, and then that fall they tried to in a sense reverse it.

CARL: Right.

JEFF: And so then the next year you were at the meeting when the change happened.

CARL: Yes. And we voted, they voted down a resolution on abortion at that meeting.

JEFF: Right.

CARL: And then they voted that formula change, which for us as a church, this church had already decided to go to the, what is it, the 87/13 split.

JEFF: Yes.

CARL: That they were giving 13 percent to BGAV and 87 percent to SBC. So that meant we went from 15 messengers to like 5. So in essence, you know, after that I got to know some of these guys and the fellowships and it was like we no longer have representation. I remember Bob Melvin and I sat down.

JEFF: Yes.

CARL: And Bob said, you know, this is what’s done and this is why we can’t win the battle any more, and this is why we need to move on.

JEFF: Have you ever talked to Brother T.C. Pinckney?

CARL: Oh, yes, I’ve talked to T.C., yeah we’ve been friends. I actually meet T.C. before I ever came to Virginia, met him at a meeting at Paul Pressler’s house.

JEFF: Yes, I’ve got Judge Pressler's book in my research stuff for those early years.

CARL: Yes, yes. You’ll find some names in there of some good friends of mine.

JEFF: Wow.

CARL: Kent Cochran is a name you’ll find in there, and Ken and I were friends on the Board. When I went to Midwestern as a trustee we had an orientation meeting and they introduced us to a professor who had preached in chapel and it was the Parable of the Talents, one had ten, one had five, and one had one. And he said the real hero of that parable was the guy with the one, and that the other ones went out and made money on the back on the peasants and the poor people. And so the real hero is not the one with ten or five, but the one who hid his. And that’s what helped us because they weren’t giving. Ferguson had recommended that we hire him as a New Testament Prof. And when that got out, and we had copies of that, it came through Kent Cochran. He knew some
students and so he got a recording and we got a transcript of it and we gave it to all the
trustees and that sunk his, sunk him. And that was the first time in the history of
Midwestern that a President recommended a Professor to be hired, and he was not hired
by the Board.

JEFF: Wow.

CARL: And then we followed that by this guy that went to the Catholic Seminary. It was
the first time we turned down tenure for a Professor in the history of the seminary. And
that’s when Dr. Ferguson decided his days were numbered; that the Board was taking
over.

JEFF: About what year was that?

CARL: That was in ’92.

JEFF: Okay.

CARL: ’93 in that area because I went off the Board for a year when I moved here.
And then by God’s grace I got back on in ’95.

JEFF: Okay. So was that like a four or five year term?

CARL: It was two five year terms.

JEFF: Okay.

CARL: Yeah, so.

JEFF: I know some are; maybe it’s the Missions Boards that are four year terms.

CARL: Yes.

JEFF: That way –

CARL: Yes, it’s five year terms. But anyway, when I came to Virginia after that first
meeting and after the way I got treated at the BGAV meeting like I was a nobody. Even
a guy I went to college with was pastoring here in Virginia, and when I got here and
started talking to him he treated me like I was a stepchild, and I was not wanted. And I
thought, you know, I can go someplace else. Went to the local Associational meeting and
they said, "You’ve got more in common with Jerry Falwell then you’ve got with us, so
why did you come here." And I said that’s alright; I don’t have to come to this
Association, so that’s what really opened my eyes about what was going on in and across
that State of Virginia. And what surprised me about the State of Virginia was that in
Louisiana you might have one or two large churches where you found a liberal pastor. In the State of Virginia the small church pastors were liberal.

JEFF: Yes.

CARL: And that surprised the heck out of me.

JEFF: Yes.

CARL: I mean I just started scratching my head and saying not in Kansas anymore Toto. This is not, so that’s again in ’94. ’94 was when I got, began to know Doyle and all these other guys.

JEFF: Okay.

CARL: And found out about the fellowships, and started to rub shoulders with those guys.

JEFF: Were you there at Grove Avenue?

CARL: I was there. I had ten guys with me.

JEFF: That’s super.

CARL: Yes, we were there, and we took, and we jumped on board right away.

JEFF: Some of these early questions, you know, you may or may not know. You may know some because you served, that’s why I’m interviewing you, you served as President for a time.

CARL: Yes.

JEFF: Was there a...so you were here in leading up to ’96, September of ’96 up at Grove.

CARL: Right.

JEFF: What were some of things that finally led the group to decide now is the time for us to become a State Convention?

CARL: I think for me Bob Melvin just kind of crystallized them when he said, "We no longer have representation." And when that happened, you realized that it was a lost cause.

JEFF: Yes.
CARL: And that’s, I think that was the straw that broke the camel’s back from what I saw. Was just that, that vote, and then the sense that this thing could never be changed so it’s time to start something new? That’s, you know, built on the Word and missions.

JEFF: Yes. I think in that spring was when they, even before they became a State Convention they voted to hire Doyle full-time.

CARL: Yes.

JEFF: How important has that been to have Doyle? Share your heart with that, a little bit about what you think about his direction, leadership, those kinds of things?

CARL: Doyle was the glue that kind of held it together in a visionary that set it in its right path. Doyle was absolutely key. I don’t think anybody could have done for us what Doyle did. You know I love Howard Baldwin but Doyle was, he was visionary enough to understand what needed to happen in a State Convention. If not for his leadership I don’t know if we would be where we are today. I mean he was of that importance. He knew the guys, the guys knew him, there was trust.

JEFF: What about his skill level?

CARL: Oh, his skill level, you know, being an Administrator and First Norfolk helped him because he was more an Executive Treasurer, well, he kind of gave everybody the sense that the Treasurer part was taken care of. But he was also that sense of visionary. You know what he would say at those early meetings, you know, this is what we’re going to be about, and this is where we’re going, and he kept us from fighting the other side.

JEFF: Yes.

CARL: You know his point was we’re here to do something new, we’re not here to destroy the old. And that sense of we’re creating something new, let’s stick to that path, let’s focus on the new and not on the old. And if churches want to join us fine, but we’re not going to actively go out there and recruit. And we’re not going to be focused, what we write, what we preach, what we share is not going to be against something, but it is going to be for the Kingdom.

JEFF: Yes.

CARL: And I think that was key because it kept us focused away from, you know, attacking what was, to just saying this is who we are. And when you codified our mission and our values that was what kept us on path. So that was, you know, his leadership, his administrative skills, his ability to take on strong personalities. Doyle had a lot of strong personalities. When you got Terry, and you got Bob, and you had, you know, a lot of these guys, Taylor over, you know, on the beach, I mean these guys were strong.
JEFF: Even David Johnson.

CARL: Yes, David Johnson. I mean, he was able, and T.C., he was able to, Howard Baldwin, he was able to take all these strong personalities and just kind of keep us pointed and keep us together and keep us going in the right direction. And I think that was a key. And too there was such a sense of unity; this is what we’re about. You know, we’re not fighting anybody; we’re fighting for the Kingdom. And that was, that sense of unity just overshadowed everything else. That was when we got together it wasn’t to fight for the Bible. It wasn’t to fight against the BGAV. But it was to build the Kingdom of God. And we all had the same thing in common. We all believed the Bible and we all wanted to practice it, so that I think more than, you know, Doyle’s leadership but that sense of who we are and what we’re going to be about. And you go back and look at the Convention, I mean, every Convention we’ve had has been more like a revival than a business meeting because we are all focused on the same thing.

JEFF: Yes.

CARL: And I think that, you know, that will get to four or five years later when we restructured, you know, it was a lot of wondering about restructuring. You know some folks lost jobs, and some folks were not happy with that. But there was this overwhelming sense that we’re on a path to building the Kingdom and nothing is going to stop it.

JEFF: Right.

CARL: And if this is going to make us more efficient in our dealing with the churches and helping the churches then that’s what we’re going to do. So, you know, the personalities stepped aside, the selfishness step aside, and everybody was focused on reaching the State of Virginia, building the Kingdom.

JEFF: That’s awesome. Do you have any idea how they came up with the name Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia? And remember if we get the stuff that --

CARL: Yes, you know, I know very little about that. But what I picked up on was the desire to be identified as conservatives in Virginia.

JEFF: Yes.

CARL: That was the overwhelming, what I picked up on, was the overwhelming desire, we want to be identified as this segment of Virginia Baptist, Conservative Baptist.

JEFF: Yes.

CARL: And you know so –
JEFF: It’s fascinating Carl; talking to the older guys that were there from back from the fellowship days of how the name came about.

CARL: Oh, I’m sure it is, yes.

JEFF: It’s been neat hearing about those kinds of things.

CARL: I’m sure.

JEFF: We’ll get to the decentralization a little bit. I’ve talked to some who actually drafted the first Constitution, Brother D.B. Martin, and Brother Doyle, and some of the others, did you have any input, were you involved?

CARL: No, the only thing I had with the beginning; I got to help put the budgets together.

JEFF: Okay.

CARL: Yes. And what’s his name from over in Bedford, he and Doyle and I used to meet in Farmville and put the budget together. Boy this is taking, the three of us, you know there wasn’t much to it, and we would have a budget meeting in Farmville.

JEFF: Right.

CARL: Because both of us were from over this direction, and he’s retired and moved out of the State of Virginia, what’s his name, I can’t think of his name. But anyway, a layman, we put the budget together and that’s, that was, I didn’t have anything to do with the Constitution and By-laws.

JEFF: Okay. The, they have a purpose statement, you know, you see it on-line when you go on-line it’s one of the first thing, well, I think it even scrolls across there.

CARL: Right.

JEFF: I’m wondering, and of course they probably did this even before you were there, but the question is how did they come up with the purpose statement? And the purpose statement simply says, “The Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia is a fellowship of Southern Baptist Convention churches cooperating to assist local congregations in their task of fulfilling the Great Commission as commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ.”

CARL: I think Doyle was the mover and shaker behind that. That the word fellowship, and the idea of assisting the churches to reach their, to do their job. I think Doyle was genius behind that. And it was, again, it’s focused on helping the churches grow and reach their communities and reach the world.

JEFF: Yes.
CARL: So that’s, Doyle’s input was focused on helping the churches, and getting away from the hierarchy of the old state conventions. I mean I served in the Louisiana State Conventions on the Executive Board and, you know, they were focused on kind of the top down.

JEFF: Right, okay, keep going on that point.

CARL: Yes, the focus of Louisiana Baptist Convention was at that time, okay, we’re the experts, you come to us, and we’ll tell you how to do convention. How to grow your church. But Doyle said, "Okay, the churches is where the action is at, so what we’re going to do is we’re going to focus on the churches."

JEFF: Yes.

CARL: And that’s how the purpose statement came about. That instead of a convention where we have the information and we will give you the programs that you need to do. Doyle’s focus was let’s figure out what the churches are doing and how we can help them fulfill the Great Commission. Because that’s what we’re supposed to be doing instead of the program oriented ministry. You know at old state conventions it was always, and I piloted, God Cares for You, in our church in Louisiana. I was one of the pilot churches for that. You know, but it was always the convention handing us programs to do ministry. And Doyle said that’s not the way it needs to happen. We need to help the churches to understand their task is the Great Commission and how can we help them fulfill the Great Commission.

JEFF: So it sounds like one of the things that they really wanted to do was steer away bureaucracy?

CARL: Yes, wanted to stay away from that hierarchy, that you know, the old state conventions. And that was part of the problem in these Southern Baptist Conventions. Was that the people were being ignored and the Executives and the Baptist Buildings were running the convention. And the guys in the churches were going wait a minute, we’re the convention, and you’re constantly telling us what to do. You’re coming to convention meetings and you’re passing things and doing things, electing presidents, and we’re just tired of that. We’re the convention. And I think that’s what Paul Pressler touched on when, you know, when he said, "Hey it’s a convention of churches and the messengers are the churches who should make the decisions." So in the SBCV, it was away from the hierarchy, away from bureaucracy, but into ministry.

JEFF: Yes.

CARL: So that was the key to that purpose statement.

JEFF: Okay.
CARL: Getting away from that hierarchy.

JEFF: Well, then they went about and developed core values.

CARL: Okay, that happened right before decentralization.

JEFF: Okay. And it sounds like Brother Geoff Hammond had a part and his skills.

CARL: Yes, and Geoff, and Charles Fuller had a part in it.

JEFF: Well, let me go through--

CARL: He was a mover and shaker.

JEFF: Really, okay.

CARL: And then First Norfolk Pastor, before –

JEFF: Yes.

CARL: Oh, what was his name, oh, golly, John –

JEFF: Powers.

CARL: John Powers.

JEFF: Yes.

CARL: John and Charles Fuller and Kelly had a major impact on that committee because we, the Implementation Task Force, was given the assignment of taking these statements and making them. What are they going to look like? How do we implement? We were implementing the core values. And they came up with the core values. Even against, at that time the objections of the then President of the SBC.

JEFF: Well, what’s interesting, these are the ones right here Carl. And I don’t have it written down. I got the foundation; this is what they came up with.

CARL: Foundation, fellowship, focus, function, future.

JEFF: Yes. The Bible, is the foundation, fellowship is, down there they even have it is based on the Word of God; the fellowship is built on healthy relationships. The focus is strengthening local church. The function is to assist churches to be one mission. And the future includes church planting. We’ll deal with church planting later because of the five, that’s a really big one.
CARL: Right, right.

JEFF: So you guys actually had to deal with these things?

CARL: Well, what happened was the committee, the task force, came up with those. And then I was asked to serve on the Implementation Task Force, which implemented these core values into the State Convention. And out of that came the need to decentralize. So it just kind of, it was just like dominos falling.

JEFF: Okay.

CARL: Once you said this is our core values then our task under Kelly Burris’ leadership was to figure out how do we take those core values and make them a reality in the State Convention. And that’s when decentralization began to surface. To say okay we don’t need to do ministry like we’re doing it. We have these guys like every other convention who are here, who are the, you know, the authorities in Sunday School, and this, and this, and this. Well, what we need is not these guys in Richmond, in Glen Allen, but we need them out on the field.

JEFF: Yes.

CARL: And that’s decentralization, taking it away from Glen Allen and putting it into the field. So that was the task that we were given. And John Sims was given the task of writing the New Constitution of how this was going to happen.

JEFF: Go ahead and talk about it because I’ve got his name down here somewhere, too.

CARL: Yes.

JEFF: Talk about how, we’ll come back to even the objectives. You know there are objectives there because now they’re going to move to the three “M’s”. We’ll talk about those in a little bit.

CARL: Yes, they came out of all this. But the implementation was such that I was a part of the rewriting of the Constitution. Kelly was a part of the Personnel Committee.

JEFF: Okay.

CARL: And they began to deal with, you know we really don’t need these guys in the office in Glen Allen; what we need is to move them into the field. So that was their thing. So John and I, along with Doyle and our attorney, our attorney now, good gracious I can’t believe I forgot his name.

JEFF: It will hit you in a minute.
CARL: Yes, but any way the four of us rewrote the Constitution.

JEFF: Okay.

CARL: And to kind of set this thing up so that it’s decentralized.

JEFF: Were you President at the time when this happened?

CARL: No, no.

JEFF: So you were just serving?

CARL: I was just serving, yes, I was serving. Kelly was the, I believe Kelly either became or was President. And then, Tim Piland became President when we, well, Tim Piland became President when we voted on the Constitution.

JEFF: Okay, before Tim was John Marks.

CARL: John Marks, yeah.

JEFF: Kelly was the second one, Terry was the first.

CARL: Yes, see John Marks was President during the decentralization and he fought us tooth and nail all the way. He came to our meeting. I was in the meeting when we as an Implementation Task Force met with the Executive Board and in the room everybody was in agreement on decentralization and where this thing needed to go except for him.

JEFF: Uh.

CARL: Because he had decided that as President he was now in control of the Convention.

JEFF: Yes.

CARL: But anyway, John Sims and I would meet. John and I and Rob Showers was the attorney.

JEFF: Okay, yes.

CARL: Rob Showers and Doyle, and we were rewriting the Constitution. And so I was surrounded by lawyers. I was the only Pastor and two lawyers. You know, often get on to Doyle, you just left me to the wolves, man. But that was our task of coming up with a Constitution that was not built on a hierarchy and bureaucracy but one that was built on ministry.
JEFF: So really it was, you talk about this; you were tweaking what we already had and expanding it to cover the new things.

CARL: Yes, we were changing and taking language out that would hinder us from decentralizing.

JEFF: Okay.

CARL: And we were installing language that would allow us to be ministry oriented, church oriented more than anything else, and get our folks out of Glen Allen and into the field.

JEFF: Okay.

CARL: So the purpose was to, you know, to support decentralization and to give us a Constitution that would not hinder where we wanted to go with decentralization.

JEFF: Well, how would ... what were the benefits of decentralization? When we hear that word you and I understand what we’re talking about, but to the average person what does that mean?

CARL: Yes. That’s means that now your missionary is not in Glen Allen, your missionary is part of your committee who is there to serve you, living in your area, working with you. And that the Convention is a partner and not a dictator, or not a giver of programs but a partner in ministry. And that’s what decentralization became, is that now the Convention is a partner, not somebody you look up to, but somebody you shoulder with side by side, you’re in the yoke with to build a kingdom. It took away that sense of you need to go to Glen Allen to figure out how to do ministry and what programs to run in your church. And now you had a missionary that was sensitive to you, and where your church was at, and was there to be a partner and not a feeder.

JEFF: I think we started with five areas, expanded to seven, I think we’re back to five.

CARL: Back to five now, yes.

JEFF: Also within those areas where we decentralized, and you can talk about this, is now only an enrichment missionary is what we call them I think.

CARL: Yes.

JEFF: Is also a church planting strategist.

CARL: Yes, and that’s what came out of decentralization, is that sense of it is not the Convention’s role to do the work of the church. And the work of the church is to reach the community, to evangelize, to witness, and to plant churches. Where as in, and I’ve
got a great friend in the State of Missouri where they’ve had more problems recently than anything else, is the fact that the State Convention is putting, is planting churches, and guys meet. They go to an Associational Meeting and they meet somebody and they say, oh, I’m the new church planter and I’m planting a church right down the road from your church. And they go we didn’t know anything about this. Well, in decentralization the church decides. The churches in the area are the ones who are initiating ministry and not the convention.

JEFF: It still rings in my head, and I’m sure it does yours, Brother Geoff Hammond, you know, churches planting churches.

CARL: Churches planting churches, churches planting, yeah we got tired of that.

JEFF: Oh, yes, he just drilled in us big time, you know.

CARL: Yes.

JEFF: Constantly.

CARL: You know what decentralization meant was we could multiply ministry without multiplying bureaucracy.

JEFF: Yes.

CARL: We could cut down on what we’re spending on salaries and administration and we could put the money into ministry.

JEFF: Yes.

CARL: And it wowed the church to see that the Cooperative Program dollars are paying dividends for them and not just supporting somebody sitting in an office some place. That their, their mission dollars are mission dollars, and that’s one of the things we came up with, are areas of missionaries.

JEFF: When you go over to Glen Allen over to the office it’s not some massive amounts of people in there.

CARL: No. And one of things with our partnership with the Dakota Baptist Convention, and I was just up there last week, is that, you know, I was able to work with a missionary in the field. Not a Director of Missions, but a missionary who was actively planting a church.

JEFF: Wow.
CARL: And they’re modeling after us. The State of Louisiana is now modeling after us. The State of Texas is modeling after us to a certain degree, but they have associations that’s not like our associations.

JEFF: Right.

CARL: Where their guys control most of the association.

JEFF: Right.

CARL: So they have had to do this.

JEFF: That’s great. Let me go to the objectives. The original objectives were strengthening, support, start, send.

CARL: Yes.

JEFF: I don’t even have it on that sheet Brother Carl.

CARL: Yes, I used to have them memorized.

JEFF: Me too, you know.

CARL: Yes.

JEFF: And all those relate to the local church, the missions, the church planting, now we’ve moved over into the “M’s”.

CARL: The “M’s”.

JEFF: The three “M’s”, multiplying, maturing, mobilizing based on Ephesians 4.

CARL: Right.

JEFF: Brother Jeff has been, Ginn, has been key into helping us with that. Let me take a second here. Alright, Brother go back to the, we were talking about the objectives.

CARL: Yes, the first time I heard the objectives were at our meeting when the Implementation Task Force met with the Task Force, and we laid them out and began to say these are our objectives, strengthening, supporting, you know as such.

JEFF: Start and send.

CARL: Starting and send, yeah. Which again go back to the sense of who we are and what we’re about, to strengthen churches, support pastors, you know to send volunteers,
you know and start churches. And it’s all revolving around that sense that church is where ministry happens and not the State Convention. The State Convention is a partner that comes alongside that helps, so I think those objectives, and those help us to continue to focus on not building a bureaucracy, not building a hierarchy, but stay ministry focused.

JEFF: Yes.

CARL: And so, you know, it was a couple of guys loved the alliteration and yeah, so you know it all sounds the same. But those kind of things help guide us to the point and to keep us focused, this is what we’re about. I remember we took them to the Convention, I think I was Executive, I was chairman of the Executive Board, I don’t remember, but I remember bringing, I brought the Constitution to the Convention and answered questions about it and such as that. And I remember when we voted on those.

JEFF: So that was during when Brother Tim was President.

CARL: Brother Tim Piland was President, yes.

JEFF: Okay.

CARL: That was the year Tim Piland was elected.

JEFF: Oh, okay.

CARL: Or his second year, I forget but anyway, yes.

JEFF: Because you came after Tim?

CARL: Yes, I was after Tim.

JEFF: Yes, I’ve got the list of everybody.

CARL: Yes.

JEFF: Recently they’ve been reduced, they still incorporate the four, but they’ve been reduced to three.

CARL: Well –

JEFF: And it’s multiplying, maturing, and mobilizing. So the multiplying dealing with churches, maturing churches, mobilizing and starting churches, I mean they incorporated the four into the three.

CARL: Right.
JEFF: It seems to have come under the new Executive Director/Treasurer.

CARL: Well, we, and that’s a topic you can, you need to explore. But one of the things that bringing Jeff on was an opportunity to look at things again as you know we’re doing in the Vision 2020, and such.

JEFF: Yes.

CARL: But it gave us an opportunity, it gave Jeff an opportunity to look at those and say, okay they’re five years old, six years old, you know, what can we do to not remarket but to save this in a way that’s going to be more effective. And help our churches grasp it, and help our people to, you know, to be involved in it, and will say this is what we are, and this is who we are, and this is what we’re doing. So it was a good transition, I, the logos they come up with and everything else and part of, you know, part of Jeff’s. And we said it for years before Doyle retired that the Executive Director/Treasurer needs to be, Treasurer needs to eliminated. And the Executive Director needs to be the guy out front, the face of the Convention, visiting in the churches. He doesn’t need to be the Treasurer taking care of the books. Doyle needed to be that. We were small, we didn’t have resources.

JEFF: Right.

CARL: There was a lot of confidence in Doyle and sharing in what they were doing. So, you know, and it was, it was kind of a throwback to the old State Convention. He was Executive Director/Treasurer. Well, now you know my hope is that we’ll change that with Vision 2020. We’ll see the need to change that and Jeff will be the Executive Director. And he’s already moved Treasurer back to Doyle staying around. But Executive Director needs to be the point person, the face of the Convention. He doesn’t need to be Treasurer worried about the money and books.

JEFF: Almost seems like, and we’re just talking casually here now, but it almost seems like that person needs to be the dreamer.

CARL: Yes. See Doyle was more an administrator he was the “Minister of Education”, in the old terms.

JEFF: Right.

CARL: Now Jeff is a pastor; so there’s a moving of the role and it goes with the maturing of the Convention that you move from somebody that needs to take care of that core, the center, and build the foundation of the Convention. Whereas now you need somebody to
go out and to expand the Convention and that’s what we’re doing, that’s what you see with the Dakota partnership.

JEFF: Talk about that a little bit because you told me you just came back from that.

CARL: Yes. I went with them in September; we did the exploring.

JEFF: Well, how did it come about? I know we can go on and read all, you know, just share a little bit.

CARL: Well, Jeff, I think it come about through Mark Custalow and Jeff and them. And I think it also come about from Jim who is the Executive Director of the Dakota Baptist Convention looked at our State Convention and he said I like the model, I like what you guys are doing. And somehow he and Jeff met, or Mark Custalow met and they began to talk. And so, we went out there and said, "Okay what will this look like? What’s this opportunities for?" And the great thing about Jim out in the Dakotas, and I can’t tell you his last name, but anyway he’s Executive Director. He said, "I want this to be reciprocal. I don’t want this to be one way. We want to come to Virginia and help you, we want you to come help us, but we want to come help you so that we’re working together." Dakota Baptist Convention, Jim has decentralized. He did a little different than what we would do it, but he had a lot more resistance.

JEFF: Yes.

CARL: So he’s had to move some things around, and so, but he has done away with Director of Admissions. He’s created an area of missionaries, and he is focusing on church planting, where we just got back from the Fargo area. 175,000 people, three Southern Baptist Churches all running less than 100. And so last year a guy John Fisher, graduated from Southern went up there and planted a church for the under 30 age group. And he met with resistance, the three pastors said you’ll never grow a church in North Dakota, Fargo, it’s not worth doing. We’re wasting our time, we’re wasting our money. And so, you know, not to be publicized, but between us they still don’t want it. We were not met with open arms when we went to one of the local churches.

JEFF: So did this young man still start a church?

CARL: Oh, yes. John and we pray for him every Wednesday night and he is starting his church, he’s got another guy coming on board that graduated from Southern. And he is reaching people, you know, it’s going to take a long, Dakotas are worse than a mission field. We had people shut doors in our face. We had people tell us to get out of here. We had people, you know, very skeptical of us. I mean it was harder plowing ground in the Dakotas than Brazil, Africa, Thailand, everywhere. It is just a very slow run.

JEFF: And this is just with the local people?
CARL: Yes, it’s the local people, yeah.

JEFF: Try to go around them.

CARL: They are very suspect, they are very suspect of people who come from the south and preach to them and then leave.

JEFF: Yes.

CARL: And so we, one of the things we talked about is that Jim said I don’t want a partnership for one year, I want it at least three years, and anybody that comes I want them to come for at least three years. Because what happens is the first year you break ground, the second year the people begin, in the community begin to look at it and say well you’re just not here to use us and get what you can and leave, you’re back. And the third year is when you begin to really make headway.

JEFF: Yes.

CARL: So we’re committed for three years.

JEFF: Wow.

CARL: And planting a church in Dilworth, Minnesota, which is kind of like a suburb of Fargo, that’s where –

JEFF: On that side of state?

CARL: Yes, it’s Fargo and Fargo kind of bleeds over into Moorhead and Moorhead bleeds over into Dilworth, Minnesota, so you just drive 20 minute drive and you’re in a little community of Dilworth.

JEFF: Okay.

CARL: And there’s not a Southern Baptist Church there, and so we’re, we are kind of getting it off the ground.

JEFF: Wow. Let me go to, and I’m going to read just a part of it, the, let me pause a second. I want to ask you a question, why is it significant the SBCV has such a strong doctrinal position. It’s long, I’m only going to read the first basically line of it, you know, because they added the Baptist Faith Message 2000 after that was approved at the annual meeting of the National Convention.

CARL: Yes.
JEFF: It says this, “We believe that the Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God, Holy without error, as originally given by God and is sufficient as our only infallible rule of faith and practice.” They took a strong stand.

CARL: Yes.

JEFF: And that’s to this day.

CARL: Right.

JEFF: Why do they take a strong stand?

CARL: Well, because that’s who we are. I mean that’s at the core of who we are. That’s, you know, that’s not, the Bible is not optional for us, it is at the core of what we believe. And to say that keeps us grounded and says, you know, if you want to know who we are, this is it. It’s not going to change. You know, so without that statement then you really have, you have chaos. Well, it’s whatever you believe here, whatever you believe there. When a church looks at us and says we want to be a part of the SBCV, well, this is who we are, if you can agree with that then fine, if you can’t then that’s okay too, but you don’t need to be a part of us. So it gives us parameters to operate in. It gives us standards. It is not a legalistic thing; it just defines us and who we are. And that’s been the thing through the years is that, you know, people say you’re being legalistic or, no, no, we’re just defining who we are. If you want to be a part of us, fine. But if you’re not, it goes back to the split or the creating our own, that a lot of BGAV churches were looking at us and saying you know all you’re doing is reacting against us. We said no, this is what we believe. You don’t agree with that, that’s your problem, that’s not ours. But this is where we stand. And so it gives us that firm foundation. It gives us a standard. It gives us a parameter that says this is what we believe and this is who we are.

JEFF: It comes down to the word we hear used quite often inerrancy.

CARL: Yes.

JEFF: And that was even an issue with the National Convention.

CARL: Yes.

JEFF: And inerrancy goes back to that phrase.

CARL: Wholly without error.

JEFF: Wholly without error. And we would even say in the original autographs, when God gave those things.
CARL: Yes. In looking back I think the wholly without error, error as originally given was just part of our trying to explain the word inerrancy.

JEFF: Right.

CARL: And I think that’s where, you know, John and I just look at that thing, he as an attorney, and me as a pastor, and we said okay, you know, if the word inerrancy is a problem, let’s define it. And let’s make sure that wholly without error says okay, you know, you can define inerrancy and you can say inerrancy in original autographs, inerrancy here, well the Bible is wholly without error.

JEFF: Right.

CARL: So you don’t have to worry about all these things whether it’s this or that, or the other, because we have scriptures, it's without error.

JEFF: Because the thing that I’ve been hearing, which I’m part of that debate too, is who gets to choose which parts are right and which parts wrong.

CARL: Well, I think that was the attorney influence in writing the Constitution in that let’s be specific, let’s be, let’s say it in a way where there’s the least amount of twisting to it, arguing over it, let’s seal the case.

JEFF: Yes.

CARL: In terms that are not debatable to a certain degree. And anybody can debate anything. And it’s just; we wanted to just make sure that it was settled in stone.

JEFF: Yes. Let me jump on, we talked about decentralization, you’ve added great comments to that. Talk about from the get go, it didn’t happen this way from the get go. It quickly happened this way, we went to a 50/50 giving plan. Explain, for you and I, we understand immediately what that means.

CARL: Right.

JEFF: What does 50/50 giving plan mean? What’s happening with that?

CARL: Well, basically we went back to the way it was at the beginning. And you’ve probably heard people say well, when the Convention was started this was the way it always was. It says to our people we support the Southern Baptist Convention. And a lot of our laypeople now remember it is the laypeople who turned the Convention around. The resurgence was fueled by messengers. Messengers meant the laypeople in the church; it’s not just the pastors. And so when the laypeople looked at this thing in the State of Virginia they wanted a strong tie to the Southern Baptist Convention. And we
decided we would do a 50/50 split it sent the message, one, we have a strong tie to the Convention, two, we’re not training to build our own Kingdom.

JEFF: Let me stop you Brother Carl. What does the 50/50 refer to, monies from the church?

CARL: Yes.

JEFF: You know, we talk to it so easily because we know what that means.

CARL: Yes. That means when the church sends the cooperative program dollars that means that their cooperative program dollars half of it is going to stay in the state and half of it is going to go to the National Convention.

JEFF: Okay.

CARL: They’re going to take the money we collect that goes to the cooperative program, that we send in as a church each month, or however you send it in, half of it will remain in the state to do state work, and half of it will go to the National Convention. So that’s the 50/50 split, half of it stays here, and half of it moves on. And half of it can be used totally for what we’re doing in the state, and half of it can be used nationally to reach the nation and the world. So that’s the 50/50 split.

JEFF: And so we still have a 50/50 giving plan.

CARL: Still have 50/50 giving plan, and that’s the only plan there’s no options.

JEFF: Right.

CARL: Because we’re committed to reaching the world and not just Virginia. And we’re not here to build the Virginia Kingdom; we’re here to build God’s Kingdom.

JEFF: We’re not here to build the SBCV organization, you know.

CARL: Right, yes. It’s never been, you know, that helps us to kind of again to say you know we’re here not for ourselves, but we’re here for the world.

JEFF: And ten percent or less is just really administration, and they’ve still been able to keep it that way.

CARL: Yes, and you know, one of the good things what we see is and most people don’t realize is that we actually get back, that 50 percent that we give away. We get back part of that 50 percent. I don’t know what the percentage would be, but somebody could figure it out. But because we get back in mission support from the North American Mission Board, and other agencies that give back to us and such.
JEFF: Yes, I think LifeWay.

CARL: Yes, LifeWay. So we actually get back part of what, well, LifeWay is not, doesn’t get any cooperative program funds.

JEFF: That’s right, that’s right.

CARL: So we get back especially from the North American Mission Board.

JEFF: Mission Board, uh-huh.

CARL: They give back to us monies to hire missionaries in the fields.

JEFF: Yes.

CARL: So it’s circular, it’s not linear its circular. We give money and money just continues to circulate throughout the Convention.

JEFF: That leads into church planting. Of the 50 percent of the monies that stay in the state, approximately 50 percent of that goes into church planting.

CARL: Goes into church planting.

JEFF: Now there are five core values, one of which is church planting, but the Convention must by appropriation dollar wise think church planting is a big deal, talk about that.

CARL: Yes, well and that, part of that is our core values and part of it is our desire to say to the State of Virginia, and to our churches, and to everyone outside, that the way you reach people is by starting a new work. We’re not here to rob the old convention. That if no churches from the old convention want to join, that’s fine. We want to plant new churches. Because we see that new churches reach people faster. They grow faster. Percentage wise and per capita, they give more per capita, and that’s how you reach the communities. It’s part of understanding that our communities are diverse and sometimes what will work in one aspect of the community may not work for another aspect of the community. So church planting is the way to grow churches, it’s New Testament. You know, it’s basically; you know, go out and plant churches, start churches. And so it keeps us mission focused. It keeps us evangelism focused.

JEFF: Yes.

CARL: And you know it keeps us focused outside our self. So it is a big deal. And we’ll see budget wise by going to the three “M’s” instead of the five “S’s” that probably it will have an impact on the budget in the days ahead. Because there is, you know, where there is a big push to plant now we need to understand that there’s got to be healthy churches in

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order to plant healthy churches. And so the focus of our new Executive Director may be a little more on strengthening or, you know, maturing churches so that a mature church can birth.

JEFF: Right, right.

CARL: But planting churches was you know the brain child of Geoff Hammond more so and that’s what he trumpeted. And I think, you know, because we’ve had success in it, because we put in the time and the effort to do it right. We didn’t just say okay you go out there and plant a church. Nor do we do the church planning assessors assessments, you know, we get these guys in, and we work with them. We try to figure out, you know. Are they good candidates? We give them the support. And that’s why 50 percent of the budget is in church planting. Because we’re a Convention of small churches still. A small church can’t afford 50 or 60 thousand dollars a year in their budget to plant a church. Where the State Convention can take the money that we give; pump it back into that process. Again it’s a circular, it’s not a linear thing. We’re not giving to them but we’re getting it back.

JEFF: Yes.

CARL: So when my church decided to plant a church, you know, we didn’t have to come up with thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars to be able to pay salaries and to do all these things. We were able to give enough to help that church planter. Well, through what we’ve given to the State Convention, to the North American Mission Board because we’re giving more, they’re able to help us with a church planter.

JEFF: Yes.

CARL: So we’re able to plant more churches. And planting churches I think is the key. Because what I talked about in my last address to the Convention as President when we look at our State Convention, our State Convention doesn’t look like our State. We have percentages of African-Americans, percentages of Latin Americans, we have percentage of Asians, and when we look at our churches we don’t have that same percentage breakdown. That we’re more White, well we need, you know, we shouldn’t be 98 percent White. We should only be about 70 percent, because when you look at the State of Virginia how many, you know, what’s the percentage breakdown in population, 20 percent of the State is African-American, well, 20 percent of our Convention ought to be African-American churches.

JEFF: Yes.

CARL: And that was my challenge to our State Convention to look more like our State when it came to the breakdown of churches. And the only way you’re going to do that is by planting churches.
JEFF: Right, right.

CARL: It’s the key. So it didn’t happen begrudgingly but it happened excitingly.

JEFF: Yes. I don’t have the figures yet but on the surface looking at it, it seems like SBCV has had a greater success rate in church planting than around the country.

CARL: Well, and the reason, the reason again it’s not the State Convention doing it, it’s the churches doing it. The preparation, you know, our church planters are not guys you just happen to meet and like and think that they are called by God to do something, no they go through training, and assessments, and I mean they go through a lot. After they get on the field we give them the support. There’s continual accountability. There’s continual training. You know the reason why it’s important and the budget reflects why it’s important in how we do it. The budget simply supports our commitment to do it the right way.

JEFF: Yes.

CARL: I tried to plant a church in Louisiana, and you know it didn’t have nearly the support, didn’t have the follow-up, didn’t have the funds, you know, basically you were left to do it yourself. My church planter, he was my responsibility, and it was just he and I. Well, here we have a church planting strategist who is out there in the field, who can be their hands on. When we tried to plant a church in Wytheville, you know, the church planting strategist was in touch with my church planter, and he was helping him along. And so it is the support because we do it as a whole and not as a part.

JEFF: Right, right.

CARL: That we’re more successful at it.

JEFF: Let me switch a little bit. Back in the, and I’ve got the records on this, but back in the early 2000’s Liberty University partnered with - Brother Falwell came and about floored all you guys with wanting to partner with SBCV.

CARL: Right.

JEFF: Tell me some of that, about if you know a little bit about that and the benefits and the things of that nature. I’m benefitting from it right now because of the SBCV scholarship.

CARL: Yes, yes. And you know, part of it, gee how do you say this, and I love Jerry and I serve on the Board at Liberty University, but part of it is Jerry wanted to build his, build the University. And one of the fields was to widen the harvest of Southern Baptist Churches. And he was not ignorant of what was happening in Southern Baptist Churches and the growth of the SBCV. And so you know he saw students, I mean that was his, that
was part of his motivation. That he could grow his university by this partnership. You look at the Board; the Board is made up of who’s who of Southern Baptist pastors to a certain degree. There’s a lot, there’s other things like the LaHayes’ and such, but when you look James Mary, Jack Graham, Jerry Vines, you know, Richard Lee, it’s a lot of who’s who of Southern Baptist. So he wanted an in-road into Southern Baptist. But he also saw that he could help us and so the partnership has grown, you know, because it’s a win-win.

JEFF: Yes.

CARL: It’s a win-win as to he can help us get an education for our students at a discounted price, and as you know it’s expensive. The scholarships that you talk about, I can give away pastor scholarships. Kids from here can go, they can get SBCV scholarships. Our staff members can go and get educated for a cheaper price. So he is helping us but in turn we are sending him students which helps him. It helps him grow the University. So it is a win-win.

JEFF: Yes.

CARL: You know I benefited by being on the Board when I was President. And Doyle was you know on the Board, Jeff’s on the Board, it’s a permanent seat on the Board. And you know I say permanent as long as the deacons of Thomas Road Baptist Church want it to be that way.

JEFF: Right.

CARL: But you know it is a win-win, he helps us, and we help him. And it gave us a University that is grounded in the Word of God, that’s safe for our people to go to. The Professors, a lot of the Professors are Southern Baptist. You know I’ve got a couple of them in our church and they’re very grounded and believe what we believe. And so, you know, any student can go to school and get pulled away from the faith, but there they are more likely to grow in their faith. And that’s very attractive because the average pastor has a kid that wants to go to college he can help him get scholarships and he can tell mom and dad you can trust the education that he’s going to get. That it is going to be Biblically based. And it’s going to be a great education because he’s got education; he’s got excellence in his education.

JEFF: Yes.

CARL: In his programs and you know, and such. It has been a win-win. It’s been a great partnership. It is a, it helps him and it helps us. And when it comes to church planting we’re beginning to pick up more church planters out of Liberty University. We got Liberty Link where students can go into churches and help churches.

JEFF: Yes.
CARL: And see the thing is those churches can trust the students that come to lead music and to preach and to work with them because they’re coming out of a school that is Biblically based. And for a University, we’ve lost our Universities that used to be Southern Baptist. Most of them are liberal. So now we’ve got one that can help feed the churches.

JEFF: You mean here in Virginia.

CARL: And across the United States.

JEFF: Oh, okay.

CARL: Yes, a lot of the schools now, some of them are changing. The school I graduated from the new President, I went to school with the new President, and he’s got that baby and he’s turned it into a conservative college.

JEFF: Great. Only a couple of things, Brother, do you know, this is developing, Vision 20/20.

CARL: Yes, I chair the committee of Vision 20/20.

JEFF: Okay. Just share a little bit, I mean that’s dreaming for the future, planning for the future.

CARL: Right, and Jeff’s idea was --

JEFF: You mean Jeff Ginn.

CARL: Jeff Ginn, yeah, his idea was okay we’ve had ten years; what’s the next ten years going to look like. What’s it going to look like between now and 20/20 and the year 2020? Redefine, not refine who we are, but look at who we are in the past, who we are now, and who we’re going to be in the days ahead. Restating the vision, it is an opportunity to look at our name, to look at our mission, to look at our values, to look at our beliefs, to investigate all of that and to build on what’s already been done.

JEFF: So it sounds like you guys are doing an in-depth evaluation or re-evaluation.

CARL: We’re re-evaluating where we’ve been.

JEFF: And not afraid to do that.

CARL: No, no, and you know we know who we are, the core will not change. And see that’s the basis of this thing. The Vision 20/20 is not like we’re going to go back and say well are we still going to say the Bible is the inerrant Word of God? Are we still going to be about, you know, partnering with churches? No, we’re not going to ask that question.
Those things are set in stone. But how, methods, you know, are we accomplishing those core values. Are we partnering? And how can we better partner with churches in the days ahead? So, it’s re-evaluating, but it’s again, how can we better do ministry?

JEFF: Yes.

CARL: That’s the key; we want to be effective in helping the church accomplish its task of reaching the community for Christ. Well, how can we better do that?

JEFF: Right.

CARL: And you know it’s all about helping the churches and doing a better job of that.

JEFF: One more thing Brother, unless when we get here something pops in your head and you say, oh I need to share this. We’re 13 years old this year, you know, we had a big 10 year kind of celebration of what God has done.

CARL: Yes, yes.

JEFF: What are some of the things, you can’t name everything, but what are some things that stand out in your mind, the highlights of what God has done from the, it started in the sense humble beginnings to where it is now?

CARL: Yes. You know if you were going to look at the highlights, Doyle’s leadership, his core statements, decentralization. I think, you know, key hires like Geoff Hammond, was a key hire. I think that all of our missionaries, I think that’s been some of the keys to who we’ve become. Is that we have brought on missionaries who believe and are sold out to what we are doing. You know I think some of the highlights is what we present at the State Convention. We present the story of the churches. It’s not the story of the Convention, but it’s the story of the churches. And I think that more than anything else, it helps our people when they come to the Convention meeting to see it’s about them.

JEFF: Brother Carl, thanks for allowing me to interview you.

CARL: You're welcome.
JEFF: Before we start, the first thing I want to ask is it all right that we interview - that this interview is recorded? And we’ll forget about that thing Brother, and we’ll just talk through anything dealing with the issues. Because another person I’m catching up to his Brother Bob Davis.

TERRY: Oh, yes, Bob is great.

JEFF: And he is living in Lynchburg.

TERRY: Yes.

JEFF: They thought he was over in Concord.

TERRY: Yes.

JEFF: So he’s actually, so I’m catching him and Carl Wiser on the same day.

TERRY: Yes.

JEFF: Because Carl is right there in the Lynchburg area, too.

TERRY: Yeah.

JEFF: Which will be real good.

TERRY: Before we had the Convention of course we had a fellowship, and we got together and just agreed to form a fellowship. And during that time, some of us were escrowing our money and my church was one of those because we were not happy at the things the money was being spent for in the old BGAV. And so my church along with a few others, there were not a lot, but there were a few others that escrowed their money during that time. So then once we joined we sent all that in to the SBCV.

JEFF: And what church were you at that time?

TERRY: I was Colonial Heights Baptist, yes.
JEFF: Well, Brother Terry if I interrupt at different times you can just get at me, Brother.

TERRY: That’s fine.

JEFF: Go back before, and some of these questions lead into this, you know there must have been issues going on nationally that impacted the State, because the only Convention was BGAV.

TERRY: Right.

JEFF: You know, there must have been things going on theologically, even financially, you know, walk me all the way up to how even ya’ll got to the point where men came together, women came together, of like mind to form the fellowship.

TERRY: Well, one of the first things that I remember was when I was a student at Averett College. I left Bluefield, Bluefield was only a two year school at the time, and I went down, and it was still fairly conservative then. It has since become much more moderate or liberal. But I attended Bluefield which was only a two year school and I transferred to Averett, and of course the President at Averett was extremely liberal fellow, and he had some liberal professors there. And, but the President, oh, I can’t think of his name.

JEFF: Of the school or of the Convention?

TERRY: Yes, of the school. The President of Averett, Kirby Godsey was the President. And Kirby did an interview with the Roanoke Times and said a number of very liberal things. You know questioning the Word of God, and just really laid it all out there basically what he didn’t believe. And when I read that article it just, just did a number on me, and I just couldn’t believe it. And that was one of the first things I saw was the BGAV was giving large sums of money to Averett and here we have a President of this school who doesn’t even believe the Bible.

JEFF: Yes.

TERRY: And of course Kirby has since, he’s gone to another school. And he’s since even said some more radical things, very radical things since that time. And of course we knew we had the problems at the University of Richmond and the BGAV had done some things at Richmond which they thought kind of rectified the situation. They were always; they were giving designated funds to the University of Richmond rather than just giving blanket to the whole school. And then I think they changed that later to where they were giving monies that could be used for scholarships at the University of Richmond. But why would I want a student to go to University of Richmond when I knew these problems were there. I couldn’t recommend anybody to go there. And so these were some of the early concerns. And then there were things that were happening nationally. We knew we had problems at Southern Seminary. And we could see problems
developing at other schools. And then I was elected to the Board of Trustees to the International Mission Board. And I there became quickly aware of problems with Keith Parks and the leadership he was providing at the International Mission Board. And the openness of accepting missionaries and so-forth without being very careful about what they believed and so-forth.

JEFF: Yes.

TERRY: And so all these issues coming together a number of us felt that we really needed to make a change. So we go together first informally kind of for lunch at the Convention. And one of the first meetings I remember as I told you earlier before you turned your tape on, the pastor of Grove Avenue Baptist, Vander Warner, was there, and mainly that meeting I think he felt was to give us encouragement to stay with the stuff and don’t give up, and hang in there. And it was a very fine meeting. We met again I think a year or so later at another State Convention meeting, and T.C. Pinckney was there. And I had never met T.C., but I knew immediately that this was a man who was able to give us leadership, and you know, he’s a layman.

JEFF: Yes.

TERRY: It’s very unusual to find a layman who really knew the issues as well as T.C. Pinckney knew them. And as we began to talk about the problems we had in Virginia, we said we needed some sort of, at least to be loosely organized so that we can be in touch with one another and realize how many of us there were. It seemed as if, I know when I would go to the State Convention I felt like I was the only one that really stood conservatively and believed the Bible and so-forth. And one of those meetings I was out in the lobby and ran into Kelly Burris, and we got to talking. And I said Kelly we need to do something about this and he agreed. And then I ran into this guy from Richmond that was a full-time evangelist. You mentioned him.

JEFF: Howard Baldwin.

TERRY: Howard Baldwin. And I said, Howard and I were talking about we needed to do something about this. And so finally I think T.C. was the one who called us all together and we had a meeting. And we first met and decided to just declare ourselves an organization. But there was a good number of us there. There was a big crowd there that day. And we heard a couple of sermons, and then we talked about the issues that were before us, and we decided that we needed to go forward as an organization. We were not even sure if we would ever become a State Convention but we needed an organization where we could encourage one another and bring some influence to bear in the BGAV. And so finally T.C. knew what had happened nationally and how they had turned things around nationally. And he thought we could do that on a State level as well, just doing the same thing, getting our churches to elect their full-slate of messengers, getting the messengers there, and then acting on these issues. And so a number of us went back to our churches. We got our church to elect a full-slate of messengers, and we would bring
those people to the Convention. But I must say that when my people got to the Convention they were so thoroughly, felt so thoroughly defeated and overwhelmed, and discouraged, it almost made them not want anything to do with the Convention nationally or otherwise.

JEFF: Yes.

TERRY: And I would say to them, no, this is not the whole picture. This is only here in Virginia.

JEFF: Yes.

TERRY: The National Convention has already made a great turn we believe we’ve made a great effort at turning that around but now we need to start here in Virginia and make a change here. And Virginia at the time, I felt was the most liberal State Convention in the entire Southern Baptist Convention. Still feel like it was. Texas had its problems and there’s one or two others that had some problems, but Virginia was just full of liberalism. And so, I think that was greatly in part due to the University of Richmond, and then also our close proximity to Southeastern Seminary. And they were cranking out these liberals down there left and right, and they were coming up there and pastoring the churches in North Carolina and Virginia. And so these two States were pretty liberal.

JEFF: Yes. And so what were some of those, you named some of them, what were some of the driving issues, whether they be theologically or financially, academically, what are some of those, I mean, I constantly hear about the inerrancy of Scripture.

TERRY: Right.

JEFF: Even hear about education, you know, we hear about what happened with, you were probably going to get there, what happened with the BGAV changing its Constitution.

TERRY: Right.

JEFF: Those kinds of things, what were some of those driving issues that were just plaguing conservatives?

TERRY: Well, it was primarily the liberalism that we saw in our seminaries. And you know Roy Honeycutt, President of the seminary at, he was, Roy was at Southern wasn’t he? And he was just, Roy probably wasn’t as liberal as some of his professors were. But he stood with his professors, and tried to stand by them, and justify some of the things that they were saying or writing or doing. And these professors would go in their classes and say things we felt were undermining the Word of God. And so we knew there had to be change.
JEFF: Yes.

TERRY: And the only way to bring change in the Southern Baptist Convention was to change at the top because the President appoints the committee on committees and then they appoint the people to serve on the boards and agencies and right on down it goes.

JEFF: Well, I’m going to ask this, does typically, I knew that happened nationally.

TERRY: Yes.

JEFF: And Virginia with the BGAV is it similar or the same way the President appoints?

TERRY: It’s similar, I’m not sure exactly because I’ve been away from it for so long. I did know, but I can’t even recall now, I’ve been away from it so long.

JEFF: I should have asked Brother T.C. that and I didn’t.

TERRY: Yes, yes, he could tell you no doubt about it.

JEFF: He would, I may still call him up and he could just tell me here’s how it worked.

TERRY: Yes, he could tell you exactly. My memory is not as good as his.

JEFF: So inerrancy of Scripture was a big issue?

TERRY: Yes, that was the biggest issue.

JEFF: Okay. Educationally what was being cranked out of the seminaries?

TERRY: Right.

JEFF: And then the seminaries, I didn’t realize that. It’s a very much a recent seminary, the Seminary of Richmond.

TERRY: Right.

JEFF: It’s not like hundreds of years old.

TERRY: No, no, it got started during the, after we started electing conservative Presidents and they started appointing conservatives trustees to serve on the boards. These professors in these seminaries could see what was happening and they could see the screws were tightening down and they knew that they were going soon to be out of a job, and they had to go somewhere. And so some of them came up with idea of starting this seminary in Richmond. And so they were able to get some professors that had either
been fired or they felt were ready to be fired that left and went there, and helped them get this seminary started. That’s what happened.

JEFF: Yes.

TERRY: And this was one of the causes of Howard Baldwin making what I thought was a famous speech one year when he was preaching at our meeting when he said, “We do not need a toxic waste dump in Virginia.” That was exactly what he was talking about. And Howard didn’t mind pulling any punches.

JEFF: No, he said that on tape and, he and I have laughed about it. I said, "Brother Howard you know what you’re famous for don’t you? The toxic waste dump speech." And he laughed and said, "Yeah, I know." He said, "I’ve been misconstrued all over the place, but I said it like it was."

TERRY: Oh, absolutely. And he was exactly right and he got a strong “Amen” from me and applause from the whole crowd. That was a great message.

JEFF: He was sharing the same thing about the, what was being educationally driven. He said, "You know, in every interview I’ve done, so far verifies the impact. You know, if you’ve got a Convention that’s liberal, and you’re producing liberal pastors, they’re going to produce liberal churches.

TERRY: Right.

JEFF: And he said, "We had to try to stem that tide which God has allowed to happen."

TERRY: Yes.

JEFF: Tell me about what the BGAV, they did something apparently that tightened your messenger ability to. They saw it coming that you were trying to overtake the Convention. It’s obvious from what I’m finding out. They did something to put an end to that.

TERRY: We were getting ground and this is attributed greatly to T.C. Pinckney and others of us working with him. But we started doing what he would challenge us to do. Take your, typically I had some people go with me to the SBC, but I didn’t try to get anybody to go to the State Convention. I didn’t want them I didn’t want them to be there. I didn’t want them to have to hear the stuff that went on there. But T.C. said, "No, that’s not the way." If we’re going to turn this around, we got to get our full-slate of messengers there. And we go to our information meetings. And he would put up on the blackboard and show us how we could turn this thing around if we got, and you know, he’s amazing with statistics and figures.

JEFF: Yes.
TERRY: And so he said here’s what you need to do and so we all started trying to get our full-slate of messengers to come to the State Convention. And of course they would go and get all beat up, it was awful. They would just, it was miserable. And I remember getting folks to go from my church, and you know I even took my Minister of Music. He’d never been to a Convention, you know, a religious Convention in his life, but he went. And they could see that we were gaining ground, and in just a few more years we would have enough to turn that thing around. And so they then at their next meeting they took drastic action. They had a Constitution By-law change that required that only monies given to the BGAV could be counted as far as sending messengers to the BGAV. Previously it had been all monies given to Cooperative Program in general, to Baptist causes I think in general is the way it had been worded, something like that. And so this made it very specific, only money given to the BGAV.

JEFF: Meaning what stayed in the State?

TERRY: Right, exactly.

JEFF: Okay.

TERRY: Yes, qualified you for your messengers, because as long as we would just send a, I would just a token amount. And I would send everything else on to the Cooperative Program nationally. And then I started escrowing it, keeping it at our church until we elected a new Convention.

JEFF: So what kind of plans did they put in place, you know, they put some giving tracks in place with this constitutional change didn’t they?

TERRY: Yes, they did. They had several giving tracks that they later developed but this constitutional change was a major -

JEFF: So the giving tracks came after this constitutional change?

TERRY: Yes, that was a major turn of events and I recall after they voted that day, of course, we voted against it. But again I saw Kelly Burris and I said, "Kelly I’m through trying to get people to come." And he said, "I am too." And we just felt like that ended it for us. And so we went back to our churches, and we continued to go. But I no longer tried to get a huge number of people to go. Because it was, there was no point in it. I was not going to give our people’s money to the BGAV to spend it the way they were spending money. And to support the things they were supporting. So, I’m thinking it was like two years after that we formed a State Convention. It was something in that neighborhood.

JEFF: Oh, formed the Convention or the fellowship?

TERRY: Actually voted to form the Convention.
JEFF: Yes, that came in ’96. I’ll be able to go Brother T.C. told me he’s pretty sure, I’m trying to see if someone will grant me some interviews from BGAV. He said some of them are still so mad they may not. He said they’ll probably let you archive, you know, their Religious Herald and things of that nature.

TERRY: Oh, yes. I have a few of those articles in here.

JEFF: That’s awesome, awesome.

TERRY: Yes. So once we did that then we voted to become a State Convention and Tommy Taylor had been our first President of the fellowship.

JEFF: Fellowship.

TERRY: And then secondly was the pastor from up there in northern Virginia. You had his, I told you he’s deceased now.

JEFF: Oh, yes, Bob Melvin.

TERRY: Bob Melvin was our second President and then I was the third President of the group but I was the first President of the new State Convention.

JEFF: Yes.

TERRY: And I served for two years, and it was a great time. It was a time of course electing and getting staff.

JEFF: Anytime we need to pause I can hit a pause button and you can do what you need to do.

TERRY: I don’t think this is urgent but let's just see if it is okay.

JEFF: Let me pause.

TERRY: I’m just not going to answer that.

JEFF: Okay. Well, let’s jump on it since it became a Convention, and we’ve talked about some of the underlining factors and stuff. Who were some of the people who helped to shape and influence the SBCV and its direction? I mean we’ve listed some names, what were some of those key people that kind of pop to your mind?

TERRY: Well, I think Tommy Taylor was instrumental because he was the first President of the fellowship.

JEFF: Yes.
TERRY: And we actually, though it was a fellowship, we did have a structure and we adopted a Constitution and By-laws, and put some things in place so that we would operate, you know, in a good way. And so those things carried right over into the Convention. We re-used a lot of that.

JEFF: Yes.

TERRY: And actually formed ourselves then as a Convention. So I think Tommy was very instrumental and of course Bob Melvin was. And Bob was a, well they both were fine gentlemen.

JEFF: Yes.

TERRY: Bob was such a sweet, gracious person, and really, he really paid the price I think in a lot of ways to stand with us and for us, and as did Tommy. Those were two wonderful leaders in our early days.

JEFF: Would you agree this goes back to the national picture because I’m hearing this more and more than when the resurgence happened of course in ’78 or ’79 was when Brother Adrian Rogers became President?

TERRY: Right.

JEFF: But there was stuff going on years before that to try to get enough to get in a conservative President.

TERRY: Yes.

JEFF: You know Brother Paige Patterson and some others realized there were some things that they can take back the Convention.

TERRY: Yes.

JEFF: Get it back conservative, every time that happens and you need to get it, you tell me.

TERRY: Let me just see what this is, they left a voice mail so I can see it.

JEFF: Well, what I was going to get to was that, what I’ve been hearing is that as that took place and it took quite a long time because, you know, as a trustee you can serve five years in a seminary and four years in the IMB or NAMB.

TERRY: You can serve two four-year terms.
JEFF: So it looked to like, T.C. was telling me until like ’88 before they had one board that was conservative.

TERRY: Right.

JEFF: So Virginia, BGAV, was so mad at the National Convention that they started really swinging the other way. It’s obvious now since SBCV has been formed.

TERRY: Right.

JEFF: It seems like when SBCV goes one way they go the direct opposite.

TERRY: Yes.

JEFF: You know of what is going on.

TERRY: Right.

JEFF: So you agree that that was what was going on?

TERRY: Yes.

JEFF: Because I did not know I wasn’t was in Southern Baptist life at the time.

TERRY: Yes. They were reacting to the SBC as well as reacting to us. And, I mean, they were just firecracker mad. I mean they were just saying they are not going to do to the State what they’ve done to the national. You know, they are not going to do that here. We’re not going to allow it.

JEFF: Yes.

TERRY: And they were right, they didn’t allow it.

JEFF: Yes.

TERRY: But I think the outcome was a lot better with what we ended up doing. But we wouldn’t be seeing the people saved we’re seeing saved now.

JEFF: Right.

TERRY: And seeing these great things happening, the new churches started all over Virginia.

JEFF: Oh, yes.
TERRY: It’s just an awesome thing.

JEFF: Thirteen years later it’s absolutely incredible.

TERRY: Yes.

JEFF: From spiritual things that have taken place that will reap eternal benefits to financial things that are absolutely incredible.

TERRY: Yes.

JEFF: It’s wonderful.

TERRY: During those early days it was interesting because a lot of churches, a lot of the church people were confused. You know they would read, all they had for information on the most part was the Religious Herald. And it was, we called it the Religious Heretic. And it was just giving out such one-sided information. And when I was elected President and even before, but especially the two years that I was elected President, churches were trying to decide what they ought to do, well, maybe we should look at that. And so somebody in the church would convince their pastor to invite me in to come in and share with them. And sometimes Doyle would be invited. Sometimes I would be invited. I went to several churches. But, I mean, sometimes it would be great they would just receive your message with amazement, and wonder, and awe, and excitement. And other times they would just want to beat you over the head the whole time you were there. And you’d leave all bloody and beat up, and I’d say, "Goodness, why do I put myself through this? You know."

JEFF: Yes.

TERRY: But I was doing for our cause and for trying to get people to see the importance of standing on the Word of God.

JEFF: Yes.

TERRY: And those were some interesting days, and I had some of those experiences that not a lot of people had because of being elected an officer earlier on.

JEFF: I’m glad, from my standpoint on this side I’m glad you did. It takes men like yourself and others that were willing to do that. During the time before the SBC became, voted to become a Convention, they didn’t even know whether the SBC would go for that or there had never been two State Conventions.

TERRY: No.
JEFF: You know, were there any talks with the BGAV leadership? Was there any way, I don’t want to even use the word to try to prevent a split and a new Convention? Was there, you know, were they refusing, I mean, was there any trying to contact before it finally became - this is the time?

TERRY: Unfortunately, I guess most of the discussions, I mean, we felt that they so detested us we didn’t even think they would even sit down in the same room with us. And we almost felt the same ways toward them.

JEFF: Okay.

TERRY: We found them so disgusting in the things that they were doing, and so most of the reaction was in the press. And, you know, we would do something and they would react to it. And they would do something, and we would react to it. Unfortunately, that’s a lot of the way it went.

JEFF: And do you know which press? And the Richmond Times Dispatch carried a number of articles. Do you know if there were any others beside that?

TERRY: The Roanoke Times and World News.

JEFF: Oh, the World News.

TERRY: Yes, at the time it was Roanoke Times and World News, but I think it’s just the Roanoke Times now, or the Times I’m not sure.

JEFF: Okay.

TERRY: They had a morning and evening paper in Roanoke. Now they combined them years ago, now it’s one paper. But they carried a number of articles on it. These were the two probably a couple of the primary papers.

JEFF: Then of course the Religious Herald just trumpeted what was going on.

TERRY: Yes.

JEFF: Well, in the year leading up to, well, in the year 1996 it was September 16, 1996, Grove Avenue Baptist Church voted to be a State Convention.

TERRY: Yes.

JEFF: And those months leading up to that.

TERRY: Yes.
JEFF: What was the atmosphere like, what was, you know, what finally led to that push?

TERRY: Well, by that time there was a lot of excitement and enthusiasm for the new Convention. Now, prior to that as you indicated or intimated there was a lot of discussion about what if we do this thing and they don’t accept us. What if the other agencies and institutions, the other agencies of the Convention will not acknowledge us and won’t accept us. And that was a concern, and we didn’t know what we would do. And I was already a trustee at the IMB so, you know, I sat Jerry down one day. Jerry Rankin, and I said, "Jerry, what if you know if we go ahead and leave and become a State Convention? What will be the response at the IMB?" And he said, "We work with State Conventions." And I said, "Well, I know that, but if we leave, and we declare ourselves a State Convention?" "We work with State Conventions."

JEFF: Open door.

TERRY: So that was all he said, but that was enough. And so I felt by that he was saying we’ll work with you not a problem. And then we got some tip of the hat at LifeWay, they seemed to be very receptive. They never said if you become a State Convention we’ll, but they were at least friendly towards us. And so we took by that, we thought we’d be okay there. And of course once we voted to become a State Convention on that, there at Grove Avenue it was later like in the next couple of days, Gene Mims came to, he came up there and met with me and Doyle and the other officers and signed agreements with us immediately. So LifeWay was the first organization that stepped forward and signed agreements with us.

JEFF: Oh, great.

TERRY: Yeah.

JEFF: I didn’t know that. So, you’ve given me that piece of information.

TERRY: I think it was the very same week. It was certainly within a few days they came and met with us. And we signed agreements, and then the others began to get onboard.

JEFF: Well, how was that final decision reached that when we meet here in September the green light, this is a go.

TERRY: Well, we the year before had met; let’s see I believe it was in Virginia Beach, I’m trying to think.

JEFF: So, ya’ll would meet before the BGAV meeting, ya’ll pastors.

TERRY: We would have, yes we did. We had a Pastor’s Conference that met before that. And that would be a great rallying point. And we met in Virginia Beach, and some of us were talking. And I can’t remember exactly who. I know, T.C. Pinckney and I were in
on the discussion. And T.C. said, "Let’s go ahead and run the flag up the poll and see how it does." We didn’t think it would pass that year but T.C. asked me if I would be willing to make the motion. And I said, "Yes, I will." And so I made the motion that we become a State Convention the year before.

JEFF: In ’95?

TERRY: Yes, yes, and it was defeated. And I was not put off by that. I knew it was only a matter of time. We were just kind of trying to; we were trying to test the waters.

JEFF: Yes, put out the feelers.

TERRY: Right, and there was so much response that we knew the next year it would go. So, during the next year I don’t remember exactly all of the things that happened, but enough other things took place that following year that it was a given. There was no question about it, and we went to Grove Avenue.

JEFF: Did you have some personal hesitations at the time when ya’ll voted to be a Convention, or do you recollect?

TERRY: No hesitation whatsoever. I knew it was the right thing.

JEFF: Right.

TERRY: Knew, I was convinced it was the right thing to do. I would have, I obviously wanted to do it the year before, but it was okay with me that it didn’t. I knew it was going to happen.

JEFF: Right.

TERRY: And so then enough things transpired I don’t remember exactly what took place the following year but enough. And as I began to talk with people and visit with people it was obvious that people were going to go and vote and it was going to happen this year.

JEFF: Right.

TERRY: So we went and it was like unanimous. It was overwhelming, and we voted to become a State Convention. And so then it turned right around to elect officers and then I was elected President. Which was in many ways affirming for me because I had made the motion the year before, and it had been voted down.

JEFF: Right.

TERRY: And yet once we did vote then they elected me as President.

JEFF: Right.
TERRY: I thought that was very affirming.

JEFF: Of course the research will bear this out once I get into when the actual Constitution of the BGAV changed. It almost seems like from what I’m starting to gather, when they did that and limited messengers ya’ll knew there was no way anymore we’re going to be able to take back this Convention.

TERRY: No, we would have had to give huge portions of money to things that we didn’t agree with, and we couldn’t do that. It was against our conscience.

JEFF: Yes, in light of that which you’ve not touched on it and others have was CBF.

TERRY: Oh, yes, that’s right.

JEFF: You know they were not only giving liberal education, they were giving to an organization that’s not even part of the SBC.

TERRY: Right, exactly right, yeah.

JEFF: It’s an interesting thing as we discuss and go down through these things. Some of these things Brother you may know about. You may have been in on them. You might not even know some of the details. If I get to some things you don’t know say, "Hey, that’s, newer stuff." Just say, "Brother I don’t know."

TERRY: Yes.

JEFF: Do you know anything about the drafting of the Constitution? Like in the process how did that happen, were you in on that?

TERRY: Yes, I was in on it. I don’t remember a great deal about it. I know as you mentioned D.B. Martin worked with us on that. I think he was chairman of that committee.

JEFF: Okay.

TERRY: And they went and worked on that and brought it back to the - we had a sub-group that worked on that and they brought it back to the main body, and we elected it. And there was one or two things that we wanted to work on it that we did. And I don’t even remember what they were, but a couple of things we adjusted in it. But then drafted and elected that Constitution.

JEFF: I remember that coming. And you know, we got a chance to read through all of that and you know affirm that as a Convention. They also came up with a purpose Statement that you see even on their website. Were you involved in that? You know, it says, “The Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia is a fellowship of Southern Baptist
Convention churches cooperating to assist local congregations in their task of fulfilling the Great Commission as commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ.”

TERRY: That Statement was adopted and was developed I believe with Geoff Hammond as we were hammering and reformulating. The original Statement that we had was a little different than that.

JEFF: And that was before he became, when he got on staff, or before he became on staff?

TERRY: I think it was before he was on staff. I believe he was just working with us. We had hired him. Doyle had hired him, or had agreed on a fee for him to work with us in this planning group.

JEFF: Right, right.

TERRY: And later he was brought on staff.

JEFF: Was he also then, then next question I have is dealing with the core values. Right now they are: foundation, fellowship, focus, function, future.

TERRY: Yes, he led us in that and again these teams came up with that as we sat down.

JEFF: So, Geoff is going to be good for when I get to these types of questions.

TERRY: Absolutely, yes, absolutely.

JEFF: Because they then they have the objectives is strength, support, start, send with churches, you know, they want to strengthen churches and the pastors and staff. And they want to support, they want to start churches, they want to send missions.

TERRY: Yes. We did a survey and I’ve got a copy of it in here among the people. Everybody that we knew that was involved in the SBCV that wanted anything to do with it. The pastors of those churches any lay-people that we had their mailing we sent this out to them. And got them back and then we sorted that. And then tried to sit down and say here’s what we feel like the people are saying. We had felt so long in the BGAV it was a top down organization where they told us what we were going to do and what we, all they wanted us to do was to pay the bill. And so we wanted this to be a bottom up organization where the people made the decisions and the people decided. And so as we tried to develop these core values and these central focus points we tried to hear from the people and say here’s what I think people are saying. Here’s what I’ve heard. And we discussed this and tossed it around a good bit in our meetings until we came up with these things.
JEFF: I can’t even wait to dig into the research that they have, you know, and some of that will bear that out in there.

TERRY: Yes.

JEFF: Also the SBCV has a very strong doctrinal Statement position. I’ll read part of it, because they’ve also included in there adopting the Baptist Faith and Message 2000, you know.

TERRY: Yes.

JEFF: So when that came out they just added to it. But this was the first Statement in it, it says, “We believe that the Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God, and is sufficient as our only infallible rule of faith and practice. The question is, why did they adopt such a strong stance?

TERRY: I would say probably a part of that especially using the term verbally, I think probably came from Doyle Chauncey.

JEFF: Yes.

TERRY: Doyle has a very high view of Scripture. And when we were forming the SBCV there were some guys in our organization that had been divorced. But Doyle didn’t feel we should impose upon the churches, but he still had some very strong convictions about divorce for instance. This is one of the issues. And so he I think insisted on this language, and we agreed with him on it. There were several people, but he was one of the primary ones I believe that led in that strong Statement.

JEFF: Well, I think all of this eventually came back to us as messengers and everything was affirmed.

TERRY: Right.

JEFF: I think without, I don’t think that I’ve ever heard any descent at any of our meetings.

TERRY: Right.

JEFF: It’s been incredible. I’m glad they have.

TERRY: Oh, yes.

JEFF: I’ll go on my record that they have a strong doctrinal Statement.

TERRY: Right, right.
JEFF: You know I ask it as if I don’t know either way or the other when I first ask it.
TERRY: Right.

JEFF: But I’m so glad they have a strong Statement.
TERRY: Sure, absolutely.

JEFF: You may have been gone Brother at this time, but they got to a point you talked about it about being from BGAV being top down.
TERRY: Yes.

JEFF: And we could see it around the country, you know, the larger things get even with the national Convention bureaucracy kind of takes over.
TERRY: Yes.

JEFF: And so much of that is needed for making an organization run.
TERRY: Right.

JEFF: SBCV wanted that to get to the people so they did something what they call to decentralize.
TERRY: Yes.

JEFF: Do you know anything, why they did that, you know, what was the reason? I know what it means. I know what, I’m the recipient of that, you know.
TERRY: Right.

JEFF: Why did they want to decentralize?
TERRY: Well, that came up very early on in our discussions because primarily the issue of associations.

JEFF: Yes.

TERRY: And I told Doyle I want to be in the State Convention but I’m not sure I want to be an association. And we kept looking at this thing where are we going to start. Were we going to start a Convention that had associations or not, and we finally agreed that we didn’t have to add that additional layer, which is what we felt it was, an additional layer to a bureaucracy. And so we would simply go with the State Convention with no associations. If churches were switched over from the BGAV to the SBCV and they
wanted to stay in their association we would allow that, no problem. You stay in your 
association and you’re finding it’s meaningful, and it’s conservative, and it’s what you 
need to do, then you stay there. But we’re not going to start associations. We will have 
regions, and so we divided the State into regions. And so this came after much 
discussion, but this is what it came down to.

JEFF: Right.

TERRY: And so then now it has been flexed out a lot more and that’s the very simple 
version. That’s how it first got started. That’s how it came to be that we did not have 
local associations. And then we discussed in getting our offices in Richmond or in 
Tidewater. Initially, Doyle and Sharon were living over in the Norfolk area in Tidewater, 
Virginia. And when we were a fellowship they had a little office over there. And so then 
as we began to pray about we knew we were going to become a State Convention, and 
then as we were looking at electing an Executive Director. I was on the committee that 
interviewed, myself and Kelly Burris was chairman of that committee. And we let’s see 
another guy named. What was his name? At any rate, we interviewed a number of 
people and it came down to, it was down to three guys.

JEFF: Yes.

TERRY: And we were really trying to seek which one of those, and we felt like the Lord 
led to Doyle he was elected. And then Doyle then said, once he was elected, he said, "I 
feel like we need to move our offices to Richmond." And so, I said, "That’s means 
you’re going to have to move." And he said, "That’s no problem."

JEFF: Yes.

TERRY: So he moved to Richmond. They found a house up there and bought it. And 
went and opened an office building. And so that’s why the offices were relocated to 
Richmond. And then as we began to look at that, "How are we going to reach out to the 
state." And so Doyle said, "I think we need to go on in the direction we’re going with 
regions and forget about the association, and work through our regions." And that’s the 
main reason that it became decentralized. And they then began to put people out in the 
regions. At that time, we didn’t have but two or three guys out there.

JEFF: Right.

TERRY: But now they’ve got a number of them.

JEFF: Yes, because I am the beneficiary when I was at Amelia Baptist because all I had 
to do was call, a good friend. All I did was call Brother Don Matthews, now he’s at 
South Carolina now.

TERRY: Sure, sure.
JEFF: Call Brother Don. And he'd say, "Where do you want to meet?"

TERRY: Right.

JEFF: Or how about the church or, I didn’t have to go down to the State office to get help.

TERRY: Right, yes.

JEFF: You know whether it be with training or whether it be with even lining something up. "Okay, I’m going to be out of the pulpit, do you have any assistance in trying to help me get some pulpit filled?"

TERRY: Yes.

JEFF: The genius of it has been wonderful. I mean we don’t live in a perfect world but it’s been a good system for us to have been decentralized.

TERRY: Good.

JEFF: Now one thing that is really big with SBCV is church planting.

TERRY: Uh-huh.

JEFF: They give quite a lot of money and resources, and time, and energy, and finances to make it happen.

TERRY: Yes.

JEFF: Why was that a big driving force?

TERRY: Well, I’d have to give Doyle a lot of credit on that. I think that in the very beginning as we were looking at forming the State Convention the criticism, a lot of the criticism that came to us was that we were going to be stealing churches from the BGAV. And Doyle, Doyle in essence said, "I don’t want to steal any churches. Any of them that want to come of course we’ll welcome them, but we’re going to grow this Convention by starting churches.” And we all agreed with that. And we began to seek to put things in place that would help us to start churches. I didn’t know a lot about it, I knew very little about it at the time. I’ve learned a lot more about it since becoming the Executive of a State Convention.

JEFF: I bet you have.
TERRY: I didn’t know a lot about it then and I just knew that it needed to happen. And Doyle was the driving force in that though. He really had a vision for starting new churches all over Virginia. And of course we were also determined to start the State Convention with it giving a large percentage to the Cooperative Program. And so we said the initial goal was the State Conventions to get where to they would give 50/50. And of course none of them ever got there. And so as soon as the BGAV formed shortly after that we said we’re going to give 50 percent.

JEFF: You mean SBC?

TERRY: Excuse me. SBCV was formed we’re going to give 50 percent to the cooperative program and keep 50 percent home, and they’ve continued to do that. And then of course the new Convention in Texas was formed they’ve tried to stay ahead of that and so they were giving 51 and now I think they’re giving 55. But it’s because we don’t have these institutions to pay for and keep up, and we can focus on doing the work of the Gospel, reaching people, and getting them Baptist and you do that primarily through new churches.

JEFF: Yes, elaborate on that a little bit because I’ve asked each person this, “What are some of those significant dynamics of the new ministry?” I’m hoping the research is going to bear it out. It seems compared nationally SBCV is ahead of the game with successful church plants.

TERRY: They seem to be. I don’t have the statistics either.

JEFF: I don’t yet either but I’m going to, you know, that’s going to be a chapter in all of this, just on church planting.

TERRY: Yes.

JEFF: So I will be delighted if it does bear it out. It just seems from what’s happening around the State and being there. What are some the those reasons for new churches. What happens dynamic wise, spiritual wise?

TERRY: New churches reach people a lot faster than old churches. They know they’ve got to it to survive for one thing. But they also it’s just in their DNA to reach people. And so churches start out reaching lost people and going after people that are lost, and getting them saved, and getting them into church. And older churches have a tendency to draw more of the transfer growth.

JEFF: Yes.

TERRY: People who transfer in from another church, from one church to another church. And so that’s not real growth. And so new churches are much more apt to reach lost people and get them saved. Now you know a lot of our churches that are good churches
do reach the lost, and certainly at Colonial Heights we reached a good number of lost people.

JEFF: Yes.

TERRY: They still are. But by and large the new church will reach lost people a lot faster.

JEFF: Yes. Within, I know you came out in the start of '96 so you were there about five years with SBCV before you came out here. So, you may be able to elaborate on all of it. The results of the first ten years and you know the five. So, what are some key things that stick out in your mind that says, "Look at what God did from how we started until where it is now?"

TERRY: Well, the income has been one thing, just amazing to have the kind of income that SBCV has had. And they’ve been able to take 50 percent of that and use a huge portion of it to start new churches. And so they’ve had resources at their disposal. They haven’t had to go around, you know, begging all the time, and looking like that they’re going to have to shut down everything. They’ve continued to grow, and grow, and increase, and so it’s going the other way in the old Convention, but in the new Convention it’s increasing and giving more to missions. Just a huge, a lot more money going to missions, to International Missions and to the North American Mission Board, and so those are the things that we were concerned about and excited to see and that’s continuing to happen, it’s amazing.

JEFF: I think in the fellowship years, I have it with, Brother Howard Baldwin said that there was a budget of like 70 something thousand, you know, and now it’s 10 plus million.

TERRY: Right.

JEFF: Million, you know, it’s like.

TERRY: Right.

JEFF: It’s just the astronomical growth.

TERRY: Yes.

JEFF: The baptisms have been, you know, of reaching people, the partnerships, getting ready to partner with South Dakota.

TERRY: Yes.

JEFF: What we have, you know, we’re just starting to do stuff.
TERRY: Right.

JEFF: The assistance and the help, it’s just has been a pleasure to see all of, to be a part of that, you know.

TERRY: It’s been exciting.

JEFF: I have mixed emotions even though God’s taken me to Florida. At least it’s a good convention in Florida.

TERRY: Right, absolutely.

JEFF: Because all I’ve ever known is SBCV.

TERRY: Right.

JEFF: You know that way.

TERRY: Yes.

JEFF: Brother is there any other thing that might be beneficial that you can think of that needs to be added. You’ve given me things to look at.

TERRY: No, that was an exciting time in my life. I wouldn’t take anything for it. It was difficult, difficult times, and it was frustrating. Some of it was painful.

JEFF: Yes.

TERRY: You know I had some friends in the BGAV, and still do have some there. I think they’re wrong theologically. You know the Executive Director of the BGAV and I went to college together at Ave...
TERRY: I’ll pray that it will, I sure do.

JEFF: Thank you.

TERRY: Good to visit with you.
Interview with T. C. Pinckney
Conducted in the home of T. C. Pinckney, Alexandria, Virginia, on July 10, 2009

JEFF: And the first thing I want to ask you Brother is it okay that we record this interview?

T.C.: Oh, yes, sure.

JEFF: Thank you. I’d love for you to share about what led the conservatives, the SBCV, to establish a fellowship. Yeah, we look back I think it’s 1993 at Old Forest Road Baptist Church.

T.C.: Yes.

JEFF: You know, so, there were apparently issues going on in the convention that brought the conservatives together.

T.C.: Well, these issues had been going for decades and the establishment of the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia as a fellowship came well after years of working. As you said that was 1993, I believe.

JEFF: Yes.

T.C.: Let’s see, I had been active since the Fall of ’85, the June, the 1985 Southern Baptist Convention in Dallas was the first one that my wife and I went to. The first one I had ever gone to.

JEFF: Was that the big one, like 40 something thousand messengers?

T.C.: Yes, that was the largest one they had. They had over 45,000 messengers registered their plus over 5,000 guests, media and others. And that was so tense, just an illustration, after one of the business sessions you can’t believe it, I mean, people were screaming point of order and etc., etc., and I was tense. And when we came to a break for some music I asked my wife if she wanted to go and get something drink, I wanted a cup of coffee. Mainly, I just wanted to walk and relax a little bit and she said no she’d stay there in her seat. So, I went up and with that kind of attendance you can imagine that every snack bar had a long line. So, I got in line behind a lady who was very expensively dressed, her hair was fancy, clothes, and she look liked she was in her 60’s, I guess. And I was standing there, and she was apparently looking for somebody she knew because every once in while she would look around. But one of these times, the third or fourth time she looked around she looked right into my eyes, and we were only a couple of feet apart. And when somebody looks right into your eyes it’s very impolite not to say something. And I said something completely innocuous like, "It’s a long line isn’t it?" Or something, and she said, "Yes, and they’re stealing this convention from us.” Just like
that. And I says, "Lady, don’t hit me. I just want a cup of coffee." And that’s just an illustration of how tense that was.

JEFF: Wow, I’ve heard so much about that particular meeting.

T.C.: And I heard later that this was the largest democratically run convention in the history of the world. The largest number of voting messengers or representatives or whatever you want to call them. So that was in ’85 and then I got started in either August or September of ’85 as I recall because I could see that this was coming to a head in Virginia, too. And what I did was I knew two conservative pastors in Virginia at that point. And I sat down with my legal size yellow pad and started calling. And I called these pastors and told them that I wanted to encourage people to come to the State Convention, conservatives, to come to the State Convention in November. And I wanted to encourage them to come and bring their messengers, and did they know any other conservative pastors. And when they told me the conservative pastors that they knew, I’d write it down. And if they had their phone number, I would write it down, or the church. Of course they would know, and if not, I could look it up. And then I’d call those pastors, and go through the same thing. And I’d spend –

JEFF: So you weren’t even writing at this time, you were just trying to make connections?

T.C.: No, no, there was no Banner at this point. This was still in late ’85, the latter half of ’85 and going on and on.

JEFF: Let me interrupt a little bit, was it the late ’70’s when like they voted Brother Adrian in as President or something? See, I don’t know a whole lot about when the resurgence really started. Was it like in the late ’70’s?

T.C.: Well, it was 1970. Well; you have to say what constitutes starting.

JEFF: Okay.

T.C.: The first victory in the conservative’s resurgence was in June of ’79 when Adrian Rogers was elected President against four other nominees on the first ballot. Which was a miracle, nobody expected him to be elected on the first ballot. Normally, what would happen you would have the ballot and then two or three lowest ones would drop out and then there would be a run-off. But there was no run-off. He got a majority on the first ballot. But that was after Paige Patterson and Paul Pressler had been working for several years going around speaking to conservatives. And as they say initially, they’d go to state, and they could meet in a phone booth. You know there would be four or five pastors there. And it gradually got bigger, and bigger, and bigger, and bigger. And then in June of ’79 Adrian was elected, and it just grew and grew and grew. And there was, well beginning in June of ’79 there was no liberal elected President of the SBC after that. And the key to re-winning the SBC to the authority of God’s of Word is the appointive
power of the SBC President. He appoints the Committee on Committees. Nobody votes on it. He appoints the Committee on Committees. The Committee on Committees nominates to the following June convention the people to serve on the Committee on Nominations, two from each state, a pastor and a layman from each state. And the Committee on Nominations. Then they nominate to the following year’s convention people to serve, to fill openings on the Trustee Boards of all the SBC entities. Now, let’s put this in the context beginning with Adrian Rogers election in June of ’79. He’s elected June of ’79. He appoints a Committee on Committees, they nominate to the June of ’80 convention people to serve on the Nominating Committee. Then they meet during the year and nominate to June of ’81 Committee people to fill openings on Trustee Boards. So, that’s two years before there are any changes on the Trustee Boards. So, it was not until then ’81, and you know, the whole Board doesn’t turn over in any one year.

JEFF: Some of them I think can serve for like ten years.

T.C.: On the Seminary Board.

JEFF: That’s right.

T.C.: They have a five-term and can be re-elected to a second five-year term.

JEFF: That’s how Howard Baldwin was.

T.C.: Yes. Now, it’s not quite that slow because people get sick. You don’t get elected to a Seminary Trustee Board or any other SBC Board when you’re 21, and hale and hardy you know. And so people do get sick, pastors move out of state, laymen retire and move to Florida or wherever. And that’s an automatic resignation from the Committee. And so for various reasons other openings come up. But it works out on a Seminary Trustee Board I would estimate an average of about an 8 year term rather than a 10 year term. But that’s still only about 12 ½ percent per year. So, it takes a long time. It took a long time for conservatives to achieve a majority on these overwhelmingly liberal boards. And on the other boards like the North American Mission Board or the International Mission Board it’s a four year term with an additional four year term.

JEFF: Okay.

T.C.: And so it’s 8 years. And for them it took 6 ½ years or something like that perhaps would be the average. And so it wasn’t really until, if I remember correctly, 1991, I’m not positive of that year, that, no that’s not quite right. Turn that off and let me ask my wife, her memory is better than mine. In June of ’86 I was elected Chairman of the Committee on Nominations.

JEFF: Now, were they representing Virginia? Or they just, or did you just . . .
T.C.: I was from, yes, I was from Virginia but I was also appointed by the SBC President to be the Chairman.

JEFF: Oh, okay.

T.C.: Or by the Committee on Committees, sorry not the Chairman.

JEFF: Yes.

T.C.: And then we reported with our nominees in June of ’87.

JEFF: Okay.

T.C.: And it was at that point that we conservatives achieved our first infinitesimal majority on our first SBC entity Board. It was in June of ’87. And so from ’79 when Adrian was elected to June of ’87 it took that long to get the first majority just on one Board. And then, but from then on it became increasingly easier because this gradual process had been taking place. So that’s the background on how it happens, and why it took so long, and why it was so slow.

JEFF: Yes, the schools were, many of them, not all of them, were to some degree either like Southwestern, I’ve been told was fairly the strongest school for conservatives. And then Southeastern was very liberal until Brother Paige went in.

T.C.: Yes. Southwestern was the most conservative, but really the most accurate way to state is it was the least liberal.

JEFF: Okay.

T.C.: It was not a conservative Seminary.

JEFF: Okay.

T.C.: They had some conservatives on their faculty. But it was by today standards it was nowhere conservative.

JEFF: Yes, Brother Howard was sharing with me, this might stimulate some thought, was that one of the fights if you want to call it, or battles, was over the schools because educationally they could pour out all these little pastors.

T.C.: Oh, absolutely. These seminaries are critical to the stance of the whole convention because as you say they graduate at potential pastors. Then they’re called to churches. And they then teach the people in the churches. And as the Bible says, "A student will become like his teacher."
JEFF: Yes.

T.C.: You know, and the people in the pews basically are students of the pastor who is doing the teaching, preaching to them. And so the seminaries are critical and, uh, that’s for the same reason the liberal Unitarians in Massachusetts established the first state public school system in the United States. Because they knew that to teach students to become like their teachers. And they among themselves privately until later one of them became, or left Unitarianism and publicized this. They said the reason they did this was to see that the students leave their parents and their churches as early an age as possible. Well, the same thing happens here with the pastors graduating from seminaries and being called to churches.

JEFF: That’s just interesting just to even you know discuss the National Convention and where it was heading and where it is now.

T.C.: Yes.

JEFF: You know it’s doing so much more for the Lord now globally.

T.C.: Yes.

JEFF: And producing conservative pastors with the schools.

T.C.: Yes.

JEFF: So much stuff, it’s like.

T.C.: Now one word of caution on this.

T.C.: Satan is not very imaginative but he is eternally and almost unbelievably persistent. And this we see the beginnings today of the same motion away from the Bible, movement away from the Bible, that we experienced and overcame in conservative resurgence. And I’m talking about the emergent church movement. And Mark Driscal, Acts 29 was there, they are focusing on pleasing people, telling people what they want to hear, and rather than sticking to God’s Word. God’s Word offends the natural man.

JEFF: Absolutely.

T.C.: And they don’t want to offend people. They want to please people. So that we have big numbers. Well, also the Bible says, “Many are called, but few are chosen." Broad is the gate that leads us to destruction, and straight is the gate that leads us to salvation,” or whatever.
JEFF: “Broad is the way and many find that, and narrow is the path and the few who find it.”

T.C.: That’s right, that’s right. And so we must, as Satan is eternally persistent in needling, inserting liberalism into true Christian churches, we must be eternally aware, cautious, and persistent in espousing God’s Word and nothing but God’s Word.

JEFF: I’ll give a hearty amen to that.


JEFF: As we’re coming forward now we’re getting into moving the scene from nationally to Virginia.

T.C.: Yes.

JEFF: Because we’re getting up to how even the fellowship was born.

T.C.: Yes.

JEFF: Bring us . . . share a bit about that.

T.C.: Okay. Well, Virginia had the reputation, which I knew nothing about before 1985, of being the most liberal Southern Baptist State. And once you have your eyes opened, you sort of wake up out of your stupor. And start looking around and listening. That became very evident. It was definitely confirmed. And so what was happening in Virginia, the more conservatives organized. And our organizational efforts really began to really have some effect. We had more conservative messengers at the November BGAV annual meeting every year, it was growing. And when I first, the first time I went to a BGAV meeting you never had more than 50 conservative votes on an issue. Not that a lot of our issues didn’t have a liberal/conservative side, you know, but when there was a liberal/conservative distinction there, you never had more than 50 votes. And on any vote where a person could be identified as voting on the conservative side, such as raising hands or ballots you wouldn’t get nearly that many. Because the conservatives were afraid of being identified as conservatives. Now, if on a ballot vote where nobody knew who signed the ballot, then you would get up to 50 or so initially.

JEFF: Out of roughly how many?

T.C.: 1500.

JEFF: Wow.

T.C.: Roughly, you know, every year it was a different figure.
JEFF: Yes, right.

T.C.: Now as we began to organize and encourage people to come, we got more, quite a few more. And indeed we were getting up close to the point if we had a couple hundred more votes; don’t quote me on that figure because we’re going back here two decades in memory.

JEFF: Yes.

T.C.: If but, if we had gotten roughly that many more votes we could have carried some of the votes. Two things began to happen at that point. Some of the conservatives by then had come four or five years in a row and seen that we didn’t win any votes. They got discouraged and stopped coming even as we encouraged new people, new pastors to come, and bring their messengers. So, we plateaued in our votes. That was what happened on our side. On the BGAV side, they could see that we were growing and they became concerned and they became concerned. And so, they wanted to, they made efforts to change the BGAV Constitution to reduce conservative votes. Now, the way they went about this, you need some more background.

JEFF: Yes, that was going to be my question, because I’ve heard this before.

T.C.: Yes, yes. The BGAV was of course very liberal and they did not like to contribute money to the SBCV which was becoming very conservative.

JEFF: To the SBC you mean.

T.C.: SBC, did I say V?

JEFF: Yes.

T.C.: No, it’s SBC.

JEFF: The National Convention.

T.C.: Yes, the National. And so they instituted but they had a problem facing them because they knew that basically many of the churches in Virginia were conservative. They just didn’t know about the national politics and even the state politics the people in the churches didn’t, even the pastors a lot of them didn’t, didn’t understand what was going on. So the BGAV established three giving tracks for a church. You could check any of those three or you could vote on and choose its own giving percentages. But one of the tracks continued to give sort of the standard percentage to the SBC Cooperative Program, 36 percent. A second track gave only I believe it was only 18 percent to the SBC, and took the other 18 percent and gave to liberal causes like the CBF, etc, and etc. And another track gave something in-between. I don’t remember it was 24 percent or whatever it was. Well, conservatives didn’t like that.
JEFF: So, how did the? . . . Because right now, it is like four tracks. That track is like nothing goes to the state. It all goes to the National Convention. It’s like you can divert the money all the monies going to the National Convention.

T.C.: No, that’s not the standard, are you talking about the BGAV now?

JEFF: BGAV, yes, like when I was at Amelia.

T.C.: Sure.

JEFF: You know the money; BGAV wasn’t keeping anything it was just going to the National Convention.

T.C.: Well, that’s because the church voted on to give its money that way.

JEFF: Right, okay.

T.C.: Yes.

JEFF: So the churches were pretty much forced.

T.C.: But it’s not really a track; it’s an individual church decision.

JEFF: Okay.

T.C.: And every church in both the BGAV and the SBCV has that prerogative of deciding on or taking to a business meeting and voting on. And then informing the State Convention that it belongs to, either the BGAV or the SBCV how it wants its Cooperative Program, so called Cooperative Program money used, where it goes.

JEFF: Okay.

T.C.: But conservative churches didn’t like the fact that less money was going from Virginia to the SBC. And so we began to encourage our churches to take advantage of that church designed individual track and specify less money to state, to go to the state, and more money to go to the SBC. And so initially, when the track preferred by the SBC, by the BGAV was at 18 percent to the SBC then what we did was turn things around and recommend to our churches that they specify that the state keep only 18 percent and send the remainder to the SBC to balance off what the liberal were doing. Well, we kept doing that and some SBCV churches went to what you mentioned here even zero to the BGAV and one-hundred percent to the SBC. And the BGAV obviously didn’t like that so in four times in five years at the annual meetings that they recommended amendments to the BGAV Constitution.

JEFF: Four times in five years?
T.C.: Yes.

JEFF: Four different recommendations?

T.C.: Yes, yes, at five different annual meetings, November annual meetings of BGAV. They recommended that the BGAV Constitution be amended so that only the money contributed to the BGAV qualified a state, a church, for messengers. So that if you gave less to the BGAV you would have less representation at the BGAV annual meeting. And that would weaken the conservative vote there because only conservative churches were giving less to the BGAV. Well, the first three times that was defeated. But simultaneously as I have mentioned some of the conservative pastors and laymen were getting discouraged because we had and we were, as I had said plateaued. And they were making strenuous efforts to get more liberal conservatives, liberal messengers at the annual meeting. And so the fifth time, the fourth time they tried it, the fifth year, the amendment passed. Now, that meant that we were going to have a lot less conservatives. And we were in effect the disfranchised conservatives. Now, conservatives could still vote but under this new thing there was no way we would ever have the scantiest possibility of achieving majority at a BGAV annual meeting. And so that was the stimulus for us to eventually decide to become a separate state convention.

JEFF: Well, how did the fellowship get going? How did even that back in ’93 at Old Forest Road, you know, was when the actual meeting, so stuff was going on before that, well you tell me about it?

T.C.: Oh, yes, sure.

JEFF: But somehow somebody got the conservatives together.

T.C.: Oh, yes, we had been getting, trying to get conservatives together since ’86. And we began by calling these pastors, identifying the pastors because we didn’t even know. Many of the pastors had no idea whether they were really conservative, or liberal, or lost in the fog or what.

JEFF: Yes.

T.C.: So we had been identifying them. I started to tell you. I had started to call people, you know, back at that time you had to pay for every long distance phone call, and sometimes my phone bill was $500 in a month just for the long distance part. But I was spending like 30 hours a week calling pastors, and encouraging them, and getting the names of other pastors, and other people in their local associations who were doing much the same thing. And our meetings began to grow. And then we began to have regional meetings to get people together. And so it just was sort of a natural progression there.
JEFF: Now, wasn’t there, and you can correct me on this, but wasn’t there a kind of seems like how the fellowship came about, and starting having something like a Pastor’s Conference before the BGAV meetings?

T.C.: Yes, yes, a conservative Pastor’s Conference, right. And that was very helpful, very helpful.

JEFF: Who were? Well, you’ve given me a list. Okay I see that, so we don’t have to go through this part about some of the people who were influential in shaping the SBCV.

T.C.: Right.

JEFF: We’ve got a list of names there. What were some of the contributions then by some of the people that helped, you know, you don’t have to go through a lot of things. But what I mean it’s probably going to rehash some of the things we already talked about.

T.C.: Yes. Well, all of these people helped tremendously and unfortunately many of them I would not be able to specify exactly what they did. One of the, for example, Jim Pope, layman from Southern Virginia, was our financial man.

JEFF: Okay.

T.C.: And he contributed greatly by handling that aspect for us.

JEFF: Then you had another guy in there that was very instrumental in the Constitution and By-laws.

T.C.: Yes, who was that?

JEFF: I’ve got him listed on the, it would be under that with the names that, right here, D.B. Martin.

T.C.: Oh, yes, yes. Well D.B. was strong in every way. All of these guys were strong.

JEFF: Yes, so I guess by this question Brother is that, you know the inerrancy of Scripture and where the BGAV was going with liberal causes and the National Convention was headed back to its strong stance of the Bible.

T.C.: Right.

JEFF: You know all the men and women that were conservative just bonded together.

T.C.: Well, that’s right, that’s right. And much of it depended upon information/education. If you’re a member of First Baptist Church of Hog-wild,
Virginia, you’re not very apt to know what’s going on among conservatives in Alexandria.

JEFF: Right.

T.C.: Or Norfolk or anywhere else because it’s a small church and you just didn’t know. So much of the of our progress was as a result of getting conservative information out. The conservative point of view, conservative rational and why it was necessary to all these churches. And many, many, many of the churches, several hundred responded very favorably once they found out about it. Once they were informed.

JEFF: Right, right. And what were some of those things that held the group together in these early stages?

T.C.: Well, I don’t blow my own horn, but the Baptist Banner was a major contributor.

JEFF: So, that was born when? Because that’s how you -

T.C.: February of 1988 was the first issue.

JEFF: Okay.

T.C.: And then it came up, you know.

JEFF: And that was a way that you could inform pastors and congregations around the state.

T.C.: That’s right. And as we built up the leadership then obviously more and more people were finding out about this information and that wasn’t only the way.

JEFF: Right.

T.C.: As pastors were invited to meetings and attended and saw that there were other pastors and laymen involved, they would be encouraged to inform their congregations more. And encourage people to come to the annual meetings. After the SBCV was formed, an example of this, a conservative pastor called me. I think it was in December or January of whatever year it was and said, "T.C., I just wanted to tell you that our church is leaving the BGAV and joining the SBCV."

And I said, "Well, whatever his name was, Joe, that’s great, what happened? What did you do? How did you convince the people?" He said, "Actually, I didn’t do very much. I just got my deacons to commit to going, all of them, to go to both the SBCV meeting and the BGAV meeting this year."

And he said, "Now, I did not brief them in advance. I did not tell them what to expect, or what I wanted from them, or anything else. I just got them to commit to going to the two meetings." And he said, "A few days after we went to the second meeting which was the BGAV meeting, the SBCV meeting was first." The chairman of the deacons said, called
me one day and said, "Pastor, we want to get together with you." And he said, "Well, that’s fine." And they set up a time. And he was in his office, and the deacons, it was a small church, there were like four deacons or something like that, came in and sat down, and he said, "Well, guys what’s on your minds." He said, "Pastor," the chairman said, "Pastor, we don’t know when we’re going to take a church vote on leaving the BGAV and joining SBCV." And he said, "It was just the stark difference between the biblically oriented SBCV meeting and the non-biblically oriented BGAV meeting that convinced them all immediately.” So, education/information.

JEFF: Wow. I remember, I still remember when I came to Virginia in ’95, you know.

T.C.: Yes.

JEFF: Green, wet behind the ears, not to ministry but to Southern Baptist.

T.C.: Yes, yes.

JEFF: And SBCV formed, so basically that’s all I knew was SBCV.

T.C.: Yes.

JEFF: And then I went out Amelia Baptist and did have any clue about liberalism.

T.C.: Yes.

JEFF: Had not grown up in liberalism.

T.C.: Yes.

JEFF: And then I had to research what BGAV was and what they were doing.

T.C.: Yes, yes.

JEFF: To help move that church it was an eye-opening experience.

T.C.: Yes.

JEFF: And so I can say that I never went to an annual meeting. I almost went my first year out there and my SBCV friends Doyle Chauncey and Geoff Hammond at the time said you know we would advise you not to. It will be a really tough experience. So, I didn’t go. Was there anything that the leadership and the fellowship years, I’m sure there must have been some tension between BGAV and SBCV fellowship. Was there anything that they tried to do to prevent the, I use the word “split.” You know to try to mend, you know, to move forward?
T.C.: No.

JEFF: I guess the big issue was when they changed that Constitution that limited what you could do.

T.C.: That’s true, but before that I had a call one day from a pastor down in Tidewater somewhere. I don’t remember his name now or which church it was, but it was down in the Tidewater area. He said T.C. you’re not going to believe this, and he was a sound conservative pastor. I knew him, I knew he was conservative.

JEFF: Yes.

T.C.: He said but the liberal group in the association here invited me to one of their meetings, he said how they thought I was liberal I have no idea, but they did. And he said at that meeting the chairman of the local liberal conservative, liberal pastor group.

JEFF: Yes.

T.C.: Not the Associational Director.

JEFF: Okay.

T.C.: But the Chairman of this group got up and he said our purpose is to make the conservatives so mad they will leave the BGAV. And basically that’s what they did. Now, they would never admit that I’m sure.

JEFF: Were there any meetings that you can think of that were, did the people in the conservatives try to deal with any of this in the BGAV leadership?

T.C.: Well, I’m sure in many cases like a conservative pastor would talk with a liberal pastor in his Association, but as far as I know there were no formal meetings.

JEFF: Okay.

T.C.: Between SBCV leadership and BGAV leadership, I mean, it would have been a complete waste of time from both perspectives.

JEFF: Now, there were I guess articles that were written when it came to the Religious Herald, I don’t know if they let ya’ll publish anything in there or not, you know, to share anything. I guess research will be able to help me. Because you’ve got some of that there on the Banner site.

T.C.: Yes. It seems to me I recall seeing some letters to the editor of the Religious Herald, published in the Religious Herald by conservatives.
JEFF: Right. Tim Height did one but the convention was already formed by that time.

T.C.: Yes.

JEFF: His got published, letter to the editor.

T.C.: Yes, I think there were several, over the years there were several letters to the editor but that was about it.

JEFF: Well, the convention you know came to life September 16, 1996 at Grove Avenue Baptist Church.

T.C.: Right.

JEFF: During that year before they voted to become a State Convention what circumstances helped lead to the decision, "Now’s the time to go."

T.C.: When the BGAV passed that amendment limiting the messengers from conservative churches.

JEFF: Well, that was very, that must have been the following year.

T.C.: I think that, well.

JEFF: So was it in the fall of 1995?

T.C.: Yes, it would have been. I believe that amendment was passed in November of 1995.

JEFF: So, I should be able to find that?

T.C.: Oh, yes, sure. And you see what that did, that amendment left conservatives with basically three choices. One, we could, well, maybe it's basically two choices. Let’s see, one, you could continue in the BGAV and never have a chance of winning a vote or a continuous issue at a BGAV meeting. You could continue to send your money to the BGAV while most of it was going to be used for liberal causes, anti-biblical causes. Well, we wouldn’t agree to that, you know. Now, if we had, if they had not passed that amendment so we still had a fair opportunity to win votes by getting more conservative messengers there. We would have stayed in the BGAV, you know. But when that became impossible to us, the other alternative was essentially to form our own state convention and give whatever money we wanted to the SBC.

JEFF: Yes.
T.C.:  And so that’s what we did. We didn’t make that decision, the BGAV made that decision.

JEFF:  Right, right.

T.C.:  They knew, they knew you know, just like seven years prior to that, like about three years I think prior to the actual event. That pastor meeting, liberal movement meeting, down in Tidewater had said, "We want to get the conservatives so mad they’ll leave." Well, they did.

JEFF:  It seems that they worried that like the National Convention there would be a takeover and the BGAV would come back, swing back conservative.

T.C.:  Yes, if had been able to get a majority of votes there.

JEFF:  The annual meeting, and I’ll go back in the records and see how many of us were there, how did that word get out like this is going to be a meeting. The vote is going to take place here in 1996?

T.C.:  Oh, well, the Banner.

JEFF:  Yes.

T.C.:  A primary way.

JEFF:  Very much so, because I even remember getting, you know, and seeing that in there.

T.C.:  Yes, sure. And we had a series of pro and con articles in there written by conservatives.

JEFF:  Right.

T.C.:  Usually conservative pastors and some of them were for establishing a separate state convention and some of them were saying this is not the time.

JEFF:  Right.

T.C.:  And we should wait for whatever reasons and there were over a period of several months several issues of the Baptist Banner there were these different articles in there. So we tried to vent the whole process and stimulate people to think about it so that they would make the wisest decision possible.

JEFF:  Yes, because there just seemed to be just a little bit of apprehension on some parts.
T.C.: Oh, yeah, sure.

JEFF: You know this is a big change, a big step, is it going to succeed?

T.C.: That’s right. It had never been done before in Southern Baptist history that there were two state conventions in one state.

JEFF: Right.

T.C.: One geographical state. So we didn’t know how the SBC was going to react to it and so we just sort of took a leap of faith there.

JEFF: Were you in any, I’m going down some of the like Constitution, and Purpose Statement, were you involved in any of those things? Like, I have a question here how the group drafted the Constitution. I’m sure I’ll run into different people like Doyle and others, will be able to help with that.

T.C.: Oh, yes, sure.

JEFF: Were there original drafts with like the fellowship that kind of carried over and some of it might have gotten up-dated?

T.C.: Well, there was a . . . One thing that I remember, I was involved in when were establishing the fellowship we had a meeting down in Lynchburg, Roanoke, and one question was, "What would our name be?" And the name that had been proposed was Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia. But some people didn’t like that. And they wanted to take out the conservatives.

JEFF: Yes.

T.C.: As being too narrow and might offend some people or whatever. And the Chairman of the meeting, and I’m not sure who that was now, I should remember, but I don’t, appointed a committee of four or five us and me as the Chairman to consider that question and come back with a recommendation to the meeting. So we went off to another room and considered it.

JEFF: So talking about the actual name.

T.C.: The actual name, right. And at least one person on the committee wanted a different name and I wanted Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, and it was I think the vote was four to one or something like that. And we came back and the committee or the meeting approved.

JEFF: Now, and they say words, and I have this on tape from Brother Howard Baldwin, he said, "You know, he told me, "I struggled at first with that personally."
T.C.: Yes.

JEFF: He said, "I don’t struggle with the term conservative because I am."

T.C.: Yes.

JEFF: He said he was worried about offending and stuff like that, he says but now in all the publications all you see is SBC of Virginia.

T.C.: Yes.

JEFF: He said you’ve got to be in on with us to know that stands for conservatives.

T.C.: Yes.

JEFF: It sounds like the national title the SBC the convention.

T.C.: Yes.

JEFF: Because the SBC of Virginia . . . the Lord had a way of pulling that together.

T.C.: Yes. How about pausing that again?

JEFF: We were discussing about how we got up to the Constitution and things of that nature.

T.C.: Right.

JEFF: And the name you just finished with talking about how you came up with the name.

T.C.: Right.

JEFF: Was there any? Were you actively involved in actually drafting Constitutions?

T.C.: Yes, but I can’t remember any details.

JEFF: Okay. I’ll be able to see those things on file.

T.C.: Right.

JEFF: When I go there. Do you know how they arrived at their purpose statement? You know they, it’s when you go to the web.
T.C.:  I do not. I can’t remember. I’m sure I was involved in some of the discussions, but I just don’t remember.

JEFF:  Okay, so anything dealing with their core values, objectives those things you see.

T.C.:  Well, those were pretty well-determined by the fact that we are inerrantist.

JEFF:  Yes.

T.C.:  And so, at that point, you go to the Bible and say, "What does it say?"

JEFF:  And I was going come down to here why you know the significance that it has such a strong doctrinal position which is, I’m not going to read it all, but, “We believe the Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God and is sufficient as our only infallible rule of faith and practice.”

T.C.:  Absolutely.

JEFF:  And of course I would agree with that.

T.C.:  Yes.

JEFF:  So, why did they, they put that right up front very strongly. This is what we believe.

T.C.:  Why, because the Southern Baptist Convention had been fighting this, for this position, since the 1960’s really. And then as we said Adrian Rogers was a representative first victory in it, but it had been going for a long time. And that same issue was graphically, most graphically throughout the United States mostly in Virginia. Because Virginia as I said was and remains as far as the BGAV goes the most liberal Southern Baptist State Convention. And so, conservatives were devoted to the inerrancy of Scripture that is key. Jesus said, "Not one jot nor tittle will change until all be accomplished or fulfilled."

JEFF:  Yes.

T.C.:  And he wasn’t talking about a book of the Bible. He wasn’t talk about a paragraph of the Bible. He wasn’t talking about a sentence of the Bible. He wasn’t talking about a word of a word. He was talking about these two little tiny graphical marks that marked the distinction between one Hebrew letter and another Hebrew letter. And that was the precision of his statement, you know.

JEFF:  Yes.
T.C.: And that was the kind of Biblical position that conservatives were trying to support.

JEFF: And then they even have it in their statement they added once the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 came out.

T.C.: Yes.

JEFF: You know they tagged onto that.

T.C.: It was stronger, that’s right.

JEFF: And BGAV as far as to my knowledge has never accepted that.

T.C.: No, no, obviously the one who made the motion that there be a committee to review the Baptist Faith and Message.

JEFF: The National Convention.

T.C.: Yes, the National Convention. One day I went to my desk in the back there and sat there and was thinking about where we in the Southern Baptist Convention stood and what was sort of the next step, and I think the Lord put it on my mind that we needed, now that we had come this far.

JEFF: Yes.

T.C.: We needed to revise the Baptist Faith and Message to get it in there. And I wasn’t quite sure how to go about it. Paige Patterson was the SBCV President at the time. I called Paige’s secretary and she put him on the phone. I told Paige what I was thinking needed to be done. And he said, these are almost his precise words, he said, “T.C. you won’t believe this but when the phone rang when my secretary called me to tell me that you were on the phone, I was sitting here wondering who I could get to make the motion.” And he and I talked on the phone, not very long, ten minutes maybe.

JEFF: Yes.

T.C.: And we worked out the wording of the motion and then at the June convention I made the motion. And then he appointed the committee, and he appointed me a place on the committee, a seat on the committee. And Adrian Rogers was the Chairman. Al Moore was one the more active members. That guy is brilliant. I don’t always agree with everything he says, but he is absolutely brilliant.

JEFF: Yes, he is.
T.C.: And Rudy Hernandez was on it and from Texas. And he’s since died. I don’t know if you knew him. He was Hispanic-American evangelist, but a wonderful Christian he was.

JEFF: Wow.

T.C.: And Simon Soy from Arizona, and who was the black member, oh, oh, from New Orleans.

JEFF: Oh, yes, used to be a street preacher, and he’s in a church down there now.

T.C.: Oh, yes.

JEFF: Luter.

T.C.: Luter, yes, Fred Luter.

JEFF: Fred Luter, yes.

T.C.: Yes, yes.

JEFF: Met him at Swift Creek one time.

T.C.: Yes. At one time we were taking a break and I usually sat with these guys on one side of the table. So, we were starting to walk out and we were, the four of us, Simon, Fred Luter, Rudy Hernandez, and myself. And I said to these three guys stop right here. And I said, “Everybody let me have your attention.” So, they all turned around, and I said, “You want to see a real rainbow coalition, look at these four here.” Now, here’s Fred, he’s black, Simon Soy is so Asiatic, he’s, you normally say something like yellow, you know.

JEFF: Yes.

T.C.: And Rudy Hernandez.

JEFF: Hispanic.

T.C.: Mexican-American, yeah, and I’m pink.

JEFF: Yes.

T.C.: "Pinckney!” - got a good laugh out of that one.
JEFF: That is. Let me shift gears a bit, there was a point in time and I know Brother Geoff Hammond will be good at this one and Doyle, SBCV went to what they call decentralization.

T.C.: Yes.

JEFF: Do you know anything about that, or were you even involved or not involved?

T.C.: I was not involved in that decision at all. I think it was a wise decision. It’s gotten the staff out among the churches much better.

JEFF: Yes.

T.C.: And I think it serves the churches and makes a better use of SBCV finances. But I was not involved in the decision.

JEFF: In light of that, and one thing that’s interesting is that the SBCV never went to an association model.

T.C.: Right.

JEFF: You know, purposely.

T.C.: Yes.

JEFF: You know can you elaborate this just hit me it just in the decentralization kind of you know it made it I think a lot better.

T.C.: Yes. I think it’s a more efficient use. And the SBCV with a smaller number of churches, 550 roughly plus or minus some, scattered around the state would have, it would have been more difficult to have associations of a couple of counties or something like that. And so, I think it’s not only more efficient. It is a more practical, organizational arrangement for the SBCV.

JEFF: Yes. It seemed like too that they wanted to have a whole new paradigm model.

T.C.: Yes.

JEFF: Not just being verbal in saying, "We’re here for the churches."

T.C.: Yes.

JEFF: Instead of becoming a massive bureaucracy.

T.C.: Yes, yes.
JEFF: Which actually happens, you know, as you get bigger. But as a pastor, I’ve appreciated being able to call instead of having to call the main office.

T.C.: Yes.

JEFF: I can just call the guy who is local.

T.C.: The nearest one, that’s right.

JEFF: And we can get together.

T.C.: Yes, as organizations get bigger there is an inevitable tendency to bureaucratize, and that has to be resisted. Some of it is essential, but often it just goes crazy. I was in a conversation yesterday at our church, last night during the end of Vacation Bible School. Several of the men who were not occupied with VBS were talking, and one of them is working for a large corporation, and was talking about just exactly that thing, more and more bureaucracy and less and less efficiency. And this is in a commercial organization.

JEFF: Yes.

T.C.: Yes.

JEFF: Church planting is a core value but it’s been a huge emphasis of SBCV.


JEFF: I agree with that. Can you elaborate on why they wanted to go that direction? And what have been some of the results of that from your personal opinion?

T.C.: Okay. Yes, well, why, God’s says, you know, essentially be my spokesman from Judah, Sumerian, to the outermost parts of the earth, and that includes the outermost parts of Virginia. So that’s the key thing. The second emphasis in this is that the SBCV has 500 plus churches, the BGAV has 1400 plus churches. And now that 1400 plus is probably an overstatement. Probably both state conventions include in their figures the number of dually aligned churches. A church that is aligned with both the BGAV and SBCV, and typically there are 53, 55 of those. And what you see every year one or two of them who have been dually aligned will become uniquely aligned with the SBCV and one or two will, new churches will become dually aligned. It’s like dipping your toe in the water, you know, seeing what’s it like. And occasionally, one of the dually aligned churches, maybe the pastor leaves or something, and he was conservative and they get a liberal pastor and they go back to the BGAV. But most of them come on over to the SBCV. So that’s part of it, but the SBCV needs more churches, organizationally they need more churches. But much more important than that organizational impetuous is a desire to get God’s word out all over the state and have more people saved.
JEFF: You know one of the things I’ve seen personally because when I was a part of Swift Creek and you know we birthed several churches, stats bear this out that, and you can comment to this when I’m done, that you see on an average more new people come to, more people come to Christ with a new church.

T.C.: With a new church, that’s right.

JEFF: Than you do with an established church.

T.C.: Yes. My comment is yes.

JEFF: Well, what has been, and I’m hoping when I do some more of the research it will bear some of this out. Because I’d like to set a whole chapter aside just for this.

T.C.: Yes.

JEFF: What’s been SBCV from your perspective? What you’ve seen their success with planting churches?

T.C.: Well, again I’m not personally involved. I’m not on any committee or anything like that.

JEFF: Right.

T.C.: That would give me first-hand knowledge of that, but certainly there have been a relatively large number of churches planted. Some of them haven’t succeeded, but that’s to be expected, and many of them have succeeded. And so praise the Lord.

JEFF: It seems like I’m open, you know, even though we’re recording this I’m hoping the record is going to show it seems like from one looking in and seeing at the annual meeting the success rate for the SBCV is much higher than other places. And a lot of that has to do with they pour a lot of resources into helping it be successful.

T.C.: Yes. Well, I would certainly anticipate that that would be true but I really don’t know. I haven’t seen any figures one way or the other.

JEFF: Do you know any of the resource type things that they pour into for church planting?

T.C.: You could look at the budget and see.

JEFF: Yeah, right.

T.C.: But I wouldn’t know personally.
JEFF: Things like I think they for at least a minimum of three years of help and that’s a wide variety of things.

T.C.: Yes.

JEFF: From financial help to we got sound equipment, we got chairs, we got trailer.

T.C.: Yes.

JEFF: To helping them partnered with a church, an established church.

T.C.: Yes.

JEFF: They’re doing a lot things that are creating a great success level for those churches to stay growing and maturing.

T.C.: Yes.

JEFF: I have a final question and if there is stuff you want to add, and it has to do with you know we’ve been a convention now I think this year makes 13 years.

T.C.: Yes.

JEFF: We had a 10 year celebration.

T.C.: Right.

JEFF: What are some of things in your mind Brother T.C. that would be like some highlights that God has done, you know, over those first 10 years in particular with the SBCV?

T.C.: Well, one that comes immediately to mind is growth. You know we started out with relatively few churches; I don’t have a specific figure in mind. Chatmoss Baptist Church was the first one to aligned uniquely with the SBCV. I do remember that, Rodney Houston, Pastor. And so we’ve grown from one church in 13 years here to it must be approaching 600 now, between 550 and 600 I think. So that’s one of the remarkable things. The budget if you go back when you talk to somebody at the SBCV just look back at the budget for the SBCV. In 1996 and compare to the one in 2009 a fantastic growth. I can’t site you the exact figures.

JEFF: It was like from hundreds of thousands to several million. That’s what it has gone from.

T.C.: Yes, well.
JEFF: I don’t even think it was a hundred.

T.C.: It may have been the fellowship I’m thinking about now, but I think our first budget was $74,000.

JEFF: I think I have it right in that stuff there from Brother Howard Baldwin.

T.C.: Yes, sure. And that may have been ’91 or something like that when we had our fellowship. But just check those figures out and see the growth and the Lord has blessed. And as long as we are faithful to his word he will continue to bless. If we start departing from faith in his word, then he will withdraw his blessing. We are not special. He is special.

JEFF: Hallelujah.

T.C.: And it’s to his glory and to spread his word that the SBCV exists. Now, the BGAV was like that at one point. If you go back to the 1800’s and read some of things that the original editor of the Religious Herald wrote in the Religious Herald couldn’t be more biblical, you know. But over time that old Satan creeps in, you know.

JEFF: Yes.

T.C.: Did God really say, and then whispering, continuing to whisper in Eve’s ear, we will be as Gods doing good and evil. God never tells us to know evil. Satan tells you to know evil. And our hearts were following. A small example, let’s say you go through a door into a room and somebody on one side the room says, "Don’t look, don’t look!" What do you do? You immediately look. We are, natural man is always in revolt against what he ought to do. And that illustration demonstrates it, you know.

JEFF: The thing that I’ve appreciated is going to the SBCV annual meeting is like going to a, either revival, Bible Conference, Pastor’s Conference, or worship service.

T.C.: Yes, worship service, that’s right.

JEFF: It’s been, it is the speakers they have it, and then it’s like mingling business with you know the central, the centrality of the whole meeting is the Word of God.

T.C.: That’s right, yes.

JEFF: And that’s been a wonderful thing. Brother T.C. is there anything else you want to add or say before we bring this to a close?

T.C.: Well, I think we’ve pretty well covered it. When we first moved to this area we were not in this house. But we were in the house about a mile and a half away. And the first Sunday, we were still unpacking. The first Sunday we didn’t know where any of the
churches were. We didn’t know where a Southern Baptist Church was. And so we went to Otis Gay Methodist Church down the road here a little ways. And we went in to the church service and we came out. And I told my wife, "We will never come back to this church again!" And she said, "Why?" Meaning, just to see what I was thinking, and I said, "Did you realize, did you recognize that in the whole church service Jesus was not mentioned one time the whole service." Well, that’s the way it was with some of the liberal Southern Baptist Churches, too, you know. And so our commitment to Jesus, our commitment to God’s Word is crucially important, nothing in life is more important.

JEFF: Yes.

T.C.: And so I just praise the Lord for what he has done in Virginia with the SBCV and with Doyle Chauncey’s leadership. And now Jeff Ginn’s leadership, and I look forward to many more years of progress there, and many, many, many more souls saved as a result.

JEFF: Well, thank you so much for this time that I can come and talk with you and add to my research.

T.C.: It’s a pleasure to talk with you too.
JEFF: I'm with Brother Doyle Chauncey. Is it all right with you that we tape record this interview?

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: Okay, what I'd like for you to do is we're going to forget about this thing sitting there and just . . . there are things going on nationally. I don't know if it was ’78 or ’79 when Brother Adrian Rogers was voted in.

DOYLE: ’79.

JEFF: Okay, that's what everybody is affirming and I've not looked back on the research yet. But apparently that even started long before that. Before he even got voted in. But nationally, there only used to be one convention in Virginia, BGAV, but apparently there were things going on because of the resurgence of the conservatives that impacted all of that.

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: Why don't you just share what you know, the best you can, about before we even got up to the fellowship. Here's a good way. What led all the way up to the fellowship?

DOYLE: Right.

JEFF: 1993 Old Forest Road Baptist Church up in Lynchburg the date was January 28th.

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: You know what got ya’ll to that point?

DOYLE: Okay, I can give you most of the history. I’ll limit myself not to the history books.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: But to my history that began in ’74, 1974. I came to Virginia pastoring a church In Virginia, Liberty Baptist Church in Appomattox, Virginia.

JEFF: That’s where you pastored, at Liberty Baptist?

DOYLE: Yes, yes, I came from seminary to Liberty Baptist Church, seminary at
Southwestern Seminary. And so, in 1974, I was, what got me interested in liberal versus conservatives in Virginia, W. A. Criswell and I had lunch with him before coming to Virginia when I was in Texas, and he says, he says to me, "You’re going to Virginia! It’s the most liberal, theologically liberal state in the nation." And he says, "Why would you want to go there." And so said, "I don’t know. I’ll report back to you what I find." And what he had expressed to me, he had been to a number of conferences in Virginia, Evangelism conferences and they basically would not invite him back. And so they had pretty well, it had begun at that point because he was tied in with Criswell College and there was brewing of differences of opinion, not just about the inerrancy of scripture but there were some Social issues involved. And that’s what I first found when I came to Liberty Baptist Church in Appomattox is that I was just 20 miles away from Virginia Baptist Hospital in Lynchburg. And I had about a half of a dozen nurses that worked at Virginia Baptist Hospital that had walked out and refused to assist doctors in the hospital to do abortions. And so, the head of the nurses at Virginia Baptist was my, was a member of my church. And so, she kept telling me of how she just would not, would not, be a part of that. And says, "Why are Baptist involved in abortions?" And so, that’s sort of how I got involved at that point. She said, "You need to check into this because that’s a Baptist Hospital. They take Baptist money and somebody needs to tell what’s happening there." And so, I got interested in that and began to check with, I was new to the state at the same time there was a professor at the University of Richmond that was, who’s father had been the editor of the Herald. And I can’t remember his name right off, Ally, Dr. Ally was a professor at the University of Richmond, and he had been speaking in a lot of places saying some things like, “Jesus never claimed to be the Son of God.”

JEFF: Wow.

DOYLE: They said, "The virgin birth is not essential to Christianity." And so, some of that was taking place in the middle ’70’s.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: And I came in and discovered that, that was, there was tension among churches in Virginia. This wasn’t even nationwide at this point. It was, most everything started in Virginia, nationally, from, and then moved west. Like the WMU got involved in women in ministry.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: And that organization was formed in Virginia, in Richmond. And so it was a controversy that primarily began with Virginia because Virginia was nearest to Southeastern Seminary. And Southeastern Seminary was organized in the late 40’s or 50’s and their, one of their visions was that they would be the Princeton of the Southern Baptist Convention. They wanted a different kind of seminary that was more or what they would say, more modern, and more theologically opened to German Theologians.
JEFF: That’s what I was going to ask you, if you thought they were trying to pattern more like a European kind of seminary.

DOYLE: Yes, yes, you know the JDEP theory.

JEFF: JDEP, yes.

DOYLE: It was the big deal at the seminary. I ran into that at Southwestern even, although Southwestern was the most conservative of all the seminaries at that, when I was there in the ‘70’s. But at Southeastern it was drifting more and more towards that and away from inerrancy of the scripture. And so the big controversy was Southeastern was a liberal seminary and 40 percent of all the pastors I think it was back in the ‘70’s, it was said to be. I don’t know that this is true you’d have to get other sources but talk was that 40 percent of the pastors in Virginia were a product of that Southeastern Seminary. That they were graduates of Southeastern and that’s what brought liberalism into the pulpits of Virginia Baptist Churches. And so that, that and Dr. Ally’s statements and his involvement in the University of Richmond they wanted, churches demanded that he be fired because of his statements that he made in a Unitarian church. Those statements can be found in the history of even the national movement. And so that’s in the textbooks you can reference this.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: And a book had come out about, “Battle for the Bible.”

JEFF: Yes, right.

DOYLE: That needs to be on your list.

JEFF: Yes, that’s one of the ones that Brother T.C. gave me to look at.

DOYLE: Yes, yes. So, I began reading. And just trying to find out what have I gotten myself in? Is Dr. Criswell correct? Is this tainted? A very liberal state? Well, it didn’t take me long to discover that Dr. Criswell was correct.

JEFF: Wow, you know, one of the things I discovered going back to Southeastern based on what you had said didn’t know whether it was true or not.

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: The statement I’ve heard by many different people is that, you know, guys would go in Conservative and come out liberal.

DOYLE: That’s the old Southeastern.
JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: Yes, yes. Yeah, there was a few that came out like Kelly Burris came out and was involved in the fight at Southeastern. Terry Harper, there were a number of them that went into Southeastern and they came out without their minds, brains falling out.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: And so there were some that got through and knew how bad it was and would not recommend their students go to Southeastern. Most people said that you need to go to New Orleans or Southwestern.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: Southern was getting a bad reputation at that time because they had Dr. Ward and Honeycutt. Is it Honeycutt? I can’t remember if it’s Honeycutt. Some of the professors at Southern Seminary were very kind to Southeastern. So Southern Seminary and Southeastern really is where things went to pot.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: You’ve got Paige Patterson and Richard Land, and all those boys that came out of New Orleans Seminary. So, it stayed fairly sound until one of my former pastors became president down there. And, I can’t think of his name right now, and then it began to go.

JEFF: To drift a little bit.

DOYLE: To drift a little bit but not, most of the ones that were thought to be liberal at that time were Southeastern first, Southern second, and then Golden Gate third, and then Midwestern. One of the presidents of the BGAV became president of Midwestern and Midwestern began to hire professors that were liberal.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: And so that’s when Midwestern began to drift pretty rapidly.

JEFF: So Brother Doyle in all of this of what you’re saying it sounds like education, the education of the those next generation of people was really having an impact affecting liberal seminaries, liberal pastors, liberal churches.

DOYLE: Yes. Union Seminary here in Richmond, which is a Presbyterian had a big influence on Virginia because the staff at the Virginia Baptist General Board here many of them have their Doctorates from Union Seminary. And in fact I’ve got everything but.
three hours worth of work from Union Seminary. I went three summers working on my Doctorate.

JEFF: Wow.

DOYLE: Because when I worked with the Virginia, with the Convention that was the place to go.

JEFF: Right.

DOYLE: And then I got labeled as a fundamentalist and couldn’t, it.

JEFF: You couldn’t shake it, could you?

DOYLE: It became unbearable for me and them. And finally, I said, "This doctorate is not worth going through this." And so, I didn’t go back and finish. I did the class work but I never did finish the paper. And it just to me I didn’t want the label.

JEFF: Yes, absolutely.

DOYLE: But I got a taste of, taste of liberalism in Virginia by attending there and many of the faculty, staff at the Board were graduates there.

JEFF: Wow. Oh, so your pastoring over there at Liberty Baptist and you get a taste of all this.

DOYLE: And I’m driving over here going to Union Seminary, primarily because my sister agreed, she’s a Presbyterian; she agreed to pay my tuition. She wanted me to go to Union because she was a faithful Presbyterian, and it was there in Richmond. And she said, I told her about my desire to go back and get my doctorate, and I was thinking about doing Southwestern. And she said, "Well, you’ve got Union Seminary there I’ll pay your way if you’ll go there."

JEFF: They’ve got a nice library. I’ve used their library recently.

DOYLE: Yes, I use their library all the time.

JEFF: You know they’ve got an extensive library.

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: It’s pretty good.

DOYLE: But to get back to the subject of ’74 when I came in abortion was a key issue. It was primarily about abortions at Virginia Baptist Hospital.
JEFF: Because Roe v Wade had just been passed in what ’73?

DOYLE: Right.

JEFF: So, it was just really getting cranking.

DOYLE: And the Virginia Baptists had done some resolutions that took almost a pro-choice position. Now you can go back and look at those resolutions and begin to see the drift and it was fairly pro-choice position in the ‘70’s and 80’s there. But as it got more and more volatile and the conservatives began to complain more and more and get more actively involved they became more conservative.

JEFF: Is that what led to the 1985 Dallas "showdown" kind of big meeting?

DOYLE: Yes, that’s part of it. That was more nationwide.

JEFF: Right.

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: So you were here in Virginia dealing with this thing?

DOYLE: I was here but the churches here were paying many of the larger churches like First Baptist Richmond. And even my church that I pastored after I left and came to Richmond. The pastor that followed me was really upset, and that church began to pay members to go to the meeting, like in Dallas.

JEFF: Wow, wow.

DOYLE: Which a lot of it they thought I had gone sour because I used to be their pastor.

JEFF: You were just radical, man.

DOYLE: Well, they had some women there that were highly involved in women’s ministry and felt like they should be ordained deacons.

JEFF: Yes.
DOYLE: If they felt led to be ordained as pastors then they had the right to do that. And so it was a women’s ministry. In fact if you, when you write your book here, you’re going to have to really probably see one of the root offenses or I guess would be reasons for the founding of the SBCV, women in ministry is a key issue.

JEFF: Okay.

DOYLE: Primarily because women in ministry organizations nationwide started here.

JEFF: Wow.

DOYLE: From the wife of one of the staff members at the BGAV. And so I got involved, I was upset. I wasn’t upset I was just confused really when I first came here as to how in the world did this state get in such a mess? When it would have a pro-choice stance and the hospital, the Baptist Hospital would be doing abortions. And so I began to inquire and find out, you know, some of the reasons for that. And then I got involved with a guy that you may not even have in the history books. I don’t know how you’re going to put him in the history books. I don’t know he might not even show up. But T.C. may have mentioned him, David Johnson, or some of the older guys, Art Ballard.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: Art Ballard was in Amherst, Virginia, which is not too far from Appomattox.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: And he led music for Liberty Baptist Church for a while. And we were going to call him as a Minister of Music, and he was a band leader in Amherst High School. And this is probably is nothing for the book so I may be wasting my breath.

JEFF: That’s all right. See, I have him listed here. And he was at the time the pastor at Old Forest Road when you became a fellowship.

DOYLE: Yes. And how he became pastor and this is for the really extended thing is that we’re talking with him. And he had agreed to come to Appomattox Liberty Baptist Church and be my minister of music. So, I get a call on Saturday night before the Sunday that we were going to make the announcement at the meeting to call him. I get a call from him on Saturday night and he says something has happened and I don’t feel like I can leave, oh, far short, he was interim music at Old Forest Road.

JEFF: Oh, okay.

DOYLE: And while he was leading the band at Amherst. And so I’d talked him into coming full-time and leaving the high school.
JEFF: Right, right.

DOYLE: He says I can’t do it because the pastor just committed suicide. And so Marvin somebody, I don’t remember the pastor’s name at Old Forest Road committed suicide. And so, the people had said, "You can’t leave. We don’t want you to leave now because the church is very upset."

JEFF: Right.

DOYLE: Which you can imagine. He shot himself in the head in parsonage. And his family were not there. He just got depressed or something. So what happened as the time went on he became, started preaching and then they said well we just want you to be our pastor. And that’s how he became pastor of Old Forest Road Baptist Church.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: So just a few years later and I had already, at that point I had left Liberty Baptist Church, you won’t believe where I went. I went and became the treasurer of the BGAV.

JEFF: I did know that from, you know, being in SBCV.

DOYLE: But it was interesting how that came about. I was on a committee, the Finance Committee, and Ken Hemphill was the Chairman of the Finance Committee.

JEFF: Was he in Virginia?

DOYLE: Yes, he was pastor of First Baptist, Galax.

JEFF: Really.

DOYLE: There and Ken and I would play golf. I was more involved in golf back then. We would play golf, and then we got to be pretty good buddies at that point.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: And he was my chairman there and I would, and then they found out I was a former C.P. and the Treasurer resigned from –

JEFF: BGAV.

DOYLE: Jim Todd was his name. Jim resigned. So, I'm sitting in Appomattox one day and Dr. Stephenson the Executive Director then of the BGAV, he comes in and he says, "I’m passing through here, and an idea just went through my mind." And he says, "You
need to be to the next Treasurer of the BGAV. Would you consider that?" My call to the ministry has always been administration. It has not been to the pastorate.

JEFF: Right.

DOYLE: I kept falling into pastorates.

JEFF: They kept chasing you.

DOYLE: They kept chasing, and I kept falling into them. But I went to the seminary to be a church administrator. And so I felt like this was God calling and so I told Dr. Stephenson I’d pray about it. And so in the 1970’s, the latter part of 1978 we moved from Appomattox to Richmond and I became the Treasurer of the BGAV. And that’s in the, before, right before the meeting where Adrian Rogers was elected President.

JEFF: Wow. So as Treasurer you get to see where all the money flows?

DOYLE: Yes. So, what I didn’t understand, those folks in the building, we don’t see things the same. So, when the meeting starting separating at the convention, they were all upset that Adrian got elected, and I was thrilled to death. Because I was primarily a W. A. Criswell. I just read him, followed him.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: And Adrian was one of my guys that I listened to all the time. And so I had Jerry Vines, I mean all those guys were people I was in a, I was administrator of a big church in Fort Worth, Travis Avenue Baptist Church, had like 15,000 members. And my pastor and W. A. Criswell were good buddies, and that’s how I got in on the lunches.

JEFF: Yes, that’s neat, that’s neat.

DOYLE: Yes, but immediately after I come to work with the BGAV everything blows up because when we go to the conventions. I’m happy when Adrian got elected. Everybody here, the Baptist building they were saying you know this is the worst thing that has ever happened to Southern Baptist Convention. Adrian Rogers got elected. And then started campaigning against Paige. He was demonized and Dr., I mean Judge Pressler was demonize. And I knew both of them, and they were gentle, kind men. And I’m sitting here fairly young; I’m not but about 30.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: 31 or 32 years old. So, I’m young, and I’m sitting in here in this office having just taken the job rethinking, "Did I make a big mistake?" Everybody else thought I made a big mistake too because they said, "How can you be happy with this." So, what happened over the next three or four years I was going to the Pastor’s Conference with
the conservatives. And they were all going to the Pastor’s Conference for all the liberals. I found myself the only person in the building at BGAV that was excited about what had taken place. So, I didn’t stay but about four years.

JEFF: Yes, I was going to ask you how long you stayed as Treasurer.

DOYLE: Yes, life got a little bit hard there for people who, you know, they kind of avoided me. Not ugly to me. They just kind of said, "You know this guy?" And I was a member at Grove Avenue Baptist Church, Vander Warren.

JEFF: Yes, yes.

DOYLE: I was kind of involved in the Pastor’s Conference. And so when I joined Grove Avenue Baptist Church. They couldn’t see why would you want to join a fundamentalist church like Grove Avenue? And then when I put my kids in school there, they knew I had lost my mind. And I was, they never did say I was in the wrong place, but it was pretty evident I was in the wrong place. So I think it was in ’81.

JEFF: You didn’t stick your toe in; you got your whole body wet.

DOYLE: Exactly. It was like ’82 or ’83 I decided it was better for me to get out of there. I just don’t fit, you know, it’s just not me. So I started doing some interim pastorates, and I start a business. And I start doing estate planning, financial planning.

JEFF: Yes, okay.

DOYLE: So for about five or six years there I’m kind of a bi-vocational pastor. I pastored a New Covenant Baptist Church over here on Patterson Avenue. Interim Pastor at Central Baptist Church on the south-side.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: Started a Christian Life Fellowship it was called. I really got them stirred up because I didn’t have Baptist in my name. That was, back then, that was a real no, no.

JEFF: Oh man, yes.

DOYLE: I was the cutting edge.

JEFF: Back in the 80’s you’re in trouble, man.

DOYLE: I was on the cutting edge, and I didn’t know it.

JEFF: You’ve lost a lot of blood haven’t you?
DOYLE: Yes, and so then I was there about three years. We had charismatic group infiltrate us, and the church was not going well, and Ken Hemphill had gone to First Baptist Norfolk with 300 members. And it was growing pretty rapidly. So, in ’88, Ken calls me and says, "I need some help down here. We just discovered we spent $150,000 that we didn’t have." He said, "We’re in trouble. Would you come down and be my administrator and associate pastor?" There wasn’t about six on the staff at that time. And he didn’t have an associate; he had a minister of music and education.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: And so that’s kind of what rescued me out of that church situation. And so I decided to do that. So in ’88 I moved to Norfolk and with Ken, and then in three years Ken leaves and goes to the Sunday School Board and ultimately to Southwestern Seminary.

JEFF: Right.

DOYLE: And Bob Record comes in.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: So Bob comes in and this all kind of fits in because I don’t know that you can put it anywhere but in the back of your mind, but Bob comes in ’92 I think it is and he says what’s going on in Virginia. He says I read all this stuff. So I try to catch him up to speed. And I say that BGAV is having a meeting over at Virginia Beach in ’92, November of ’92. So I go to the convention of course. We’d already been in stormy conventions, you know. It was all through the ‘80’s was conservatives would stand up and they would get voted down and hissed, you know, it was kind of, you know.

JEFF: Literally hissed at?

DOYLE: No, they just, I wouldn’t say hissed, I’d say.

JEFF: Other men have said, almost in the form of a “boo”.

DOYLE: I would say it was more like a “boo”. It was an, “oh” or like they were trying to say why don’t you sit down and shut up, you know.

JEFF: Yes, yes.

DOYLE: And so Bob goes to the convention with me over there. And I said we’ll go to the conventions over here, and we’ll get a taste of what’s going on. Well, they presented a resolution at that convention that basically did not include that homosexuality was a sin. And that, you need to get a copy of that resolution for ’92 because that’s a foundational thing for our forming the fellowship that following January. So, we met in November of
'92 that resolution was passed. Now, here’s the thing that you’ll have to say or you’ll get caught, because it’s not true. The resolution that came from the BGAV staff and board said homosexuality was a sin. But, you know, love the sinner that type of thing. When it got on the floor of the convention in Virginia Beach, a messenger stood up to amend the resolution and take out homosexuality is sin. And it passed overwhelmingly with only a few conservatives voting against the amendment. So it was amended to exclude the statement, “homosexuality is a sin.”

JEFF: Do you all here have any of those records on file?

DOYLE: Yes, I’ve got the resolution for ’92 now.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: The other one you need is ’93. So that’s how the meeting of the 600 or 800, everybody says there’s a different number there, it was a church full of us. That’s how the meeting came about at Old Forest Road Baptist Church.

JEFF: This particular one.

DOYLE: Alright, that was at Old Forest Road Baptist Church. So when that resolution was changed, amended, then conservatives were meeting in little groups all over the state. And Bob Jackson was one the organizers of that meeting. In fact, I think he was the moderator of the meeting at Old Forest Road.

JEFF: Bob Jackson was?

DOYLE: The one that later left.

JEFF: Oh, yes, okay, yes.

DOYLE: And so Bob Reccord, to finish that story, Bob got a taste of what we were up against. And I said, and then when the meeting was announced that we were going to meet at Old Forest Road Baptist Church in January to discuss that. What are we going to do? How can we impact the other convention? See, we never met to organize a new convention. I don’t know how many people have told you that, but you need to tell your story that because it’s important.

JEFF: Everyone has told me that.
DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: That was never you all’s intention.

DOYLE: Never our intention in fact T.C. and I voted against it in 1995 at the annual meeting. I think he and I were the only ones. Terry was in favor, Terry Harper made the motion.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: And T.C. and stood to vote the motion down and it was, it was defeated. Then later in ’96 we changed our minds, and everybody voted unanimously.

JEFF: Right, Terry told me that on Monday, Brother Terry did, he said I had had enough I was ready to go.

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: But he said in God’s hindsight, now hindsight from the Lord.

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: It started when it should have.

DOYLE: Yes, and so we were, I told Bob, I said Bob go with me to this meeting in Old Forest Road. Neither one of us really were that involved with the smaller groups that were meeting around. I went to one a couple of times. I knew T.C. Pinckney. I got to know T.C. Pinckney. I know he was writing his Banner, and I got The Banner and stuff like that. But I really wasn’t that active because I’m doing my job at First Norfolk, and I don’t have time.

JEFF: Right.

DOYLE: I’m not a pastor that could take time off to do that. I had to take care of business.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: Ken Hemphill was involved and he was almost on the other side to begin with, he and Charles Fuller.

JEFF: Wow.

DOYLE: He and Charles Fuller were opposed to SBCV in the beginning. So they, he didn’t like me being a part of it on the staff. So when Bob came in, Bob Reccord came
in, I said Bob, "Ken didn’t like me being involved." I was more involved when Bob got there. Ken didn’t like me being involved. "Do you have a problem with me being involved?" He said, "No, I don’t have a problem with you being involved." He says somebody got to do something. So, it was that. But in that meeting in January I tell Bob let’s go over there. We had a pilot in Norfolk, and so, we called this pilot and said, "Hey, how about flying us over to Lynchburg. We got a meeting to go to."

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: And that pilot he loved to take us just anywhere we wanted to go.

JEFF: And this was the January 28, 1993.

DOYLE: January 28th meeting.

JEFF: Okay.

DOYLE: And so we fly over there and we get in late and because we really hadn’t, I hadn’t really planned on going to the meeting until Bob said something about it. I would just like to find out more. And I said, "Well, there’s a meeting over at Old Forest Road I hadn’t planned on going but start here in a while." So we got over there we were about an hour late I guess. We crawl in there’s only a few seats left, it’s packed. So we get on the very last row of the balcony up there and Bob and I were sitting there, and so they’re having a meeting like that. And so, they make a recommendation to form Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia and it passes. And then they start electing officers. Well, Bob Davis had called me earlier and he says that there’s a meeting over there, and he says, "I think you’ll, I’d like to recommend you to be the Treasurer of this group." And I said, "Bob, I don’t, I got a job here. That is all I can do." And I said, "Anybody can do that Treasurer’s job." I said. He says, "You ought to do it because you were Treasurer at BGAV, and you would be the one to try to set up the bookkeeping." He said, "We don’t have any money so it’s an easy job."

JEFF: Zero from zero is still zero.

DOYLE: Yes, there’s not any money. And we really don’t plan it but we need some officers. And I said, "Well, let me think about it and pray about it." And so, I’m sitting on that back row. I had dismissed the whole conversation that I had with Bob. I never did, I don’t think I ever agreed to do this. Bob and I have a dispute over it. He said, "You agreed to do." And I said, "Bob, I don’t think I ever did say that because I wasn’t even planning on being at the meeting." But anyway, whether I remember it correctly or whether he did, I don’t know. He’s probably more correct than I am because my memory is not that good. But I’m sitting on this back row, and Bob and I, watching that and all of a sudden they start nominating officers, Bob Jackson for President, or something like that. And it got down to Treasurer, and my name gets thrown out and I’m back there. And I look at Bob, and Bob looks at me, Bob Reccord.
JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: Bob Reccord looks at me and I look at him and I said, I just kind of went I don’t know what’s going on. And so I got elected Treasurer sitting on that back row of that meeting. So after the meeting I go down and said Bob I don’t, I didn’t agree to do that.

JEFF: This Bob Davis now?

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: I said Bob I didn’t agree to do that. Yeah, you did.

JEFF: I have an interview with him later in the month.

DOYLE: Yes, Bob and I got to know each other because he lived in Concord and I was pastor at Appomattox. He always wanted to get a revival out of me.

JEFF: Yes, he’s living in Lynchburg now.

DOYLE: Yes, he always wanted a revival out of me. I never gave him a revival in the five years that I was there. He still holds that against me. But that’s how I got elected Treasurer. And so the homosexuality thing is a key thing event in the formulation of the fellowship.

JEFF: Of the fellowship.

DOYLE: Yes. In ’93 you have to read that one too.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: Because you can’t do one without the other you’ll misrepresent the BGAV.

JEFF: Okay.

DOYLE: Because in ’93 they reversed it.

JEFF: Really.

DOYLE: And so it’s rewritten in ’93, and it’s rewritten in a way that it is more of a, it’s not still not very acceptable to most people. But at least it put the phrase back in that homosexuality is a sin. But we're formed now.
JEFF: Yes, because at that point, the annual meeting wasn’t coming until the next Fall.

DOYLE: ’93, so in November of ’93 that resolution was adopted.

JEFF: Right. And ya’ll were way back in January because it just happened that November.

DOYLE: In the mean time the office is the dining room table at my house. Sharon’s the bookkeeper. And there’s no money, there’s just a bank account. And the only money that kept running in was we would run the Bible Conference stuff through there.

JEFF: Right.

DOYLE: Because the Bible Conference was going on since ’88 I think.

JEFF: You were doing that. And what people have been telling me, and you can verify this, that you would run that right before the annual meeting.

DOYLE: Right, yes. And so the Bible Conference was really the inspiration to get people involved and informed.

JEFF: How did that go? Did ya’ll have good crowds? Did you, how did that go?

DOYLE: Had big crowds, had good crowds. It was not, it was, in fact we would have some crowds as big as our annual meeting today. So from an attendance standpoint there’s not, you know, our meetings are, of course back then a controversy would draw people out.

JEFF: Right.

DOYLE: Dallas and 75,000 people show up at the Southern Baptist Convention in ’75. I think it was.

JEFF: ’85.

DOYLE: ‘85, yes.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: And so, you know, it drew big crowds. And so we had some pretty good size crowds. Especially when we would invite Adrian to speak, or Paige, or somebody like that to come in to speak. Everybody would come out.

JEFF: Yes.
DOYLE: And so it was the Bible Conference was really, and this, your also going to have to put an emphasis one thing as this is layman driven. A layman’s movement much like Missouri with Moran. I don’t know if you’ve heard of John Moran, I think it’s the Honorable John Moran. No, it’s not John it’s something else. But they had a publication similar to *The Banner*.

JEFF: Okay.

DOYLE: You probably need to get a copy of that because it ought to be in the archives.

JEFF: From Missouri or *The Banner*?

DOYLE: No, it’s Missouri but I got a copy of it.

JEFF: Okay.

DOYLE: I can give you a copy of it, too.

JEFF: Okay.

DOYLE: But do that.

JEFF: Brother T.C. started *The Banner* in ’88.

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: Because I’ve already had a conversation with him and it was.

DOYLE: And he was, he was, he and I can’t think of his first name, but Moran. He was influenced heavily by what was going on in Missouri.

JEFF: Okay.

DOYLE: Or it could be vice versa, it could be Moran was influenced by T.C. I can’t remember the timing which came first.

JEFF: But it seems like T.C. so far played a very vital in role in those early years of trying to get ya’ll organized about how to take, how to bring the BGAV back conservative.

DOYLE: But the reason it was so successful is that he got the ears of the laypeople, men in the churches began to read *The Banner*, and then they started causing problems in the churches for the liberal pastors. And so the laymen, if you’ve got key laymen in there like John Sims of Roanoke. If you don’t include John Sims in this you’ll miss a vital part of history.
JEFF: Let me look and see if I’ve got him.

DOYLE: I think I saw him on the list.

JEFF: Yes, see right here. I got him.

DOYLE: Yes. Another one in Martinsville, I’ll have to get you his name and women like Phyllis.

JEFF: Phyllis Randall and Catherine Kemp.

DOYLE: And there was an Ann.

JEFF: I’ve got Ann on here I think, let me look.

DOYLE: But if you don’t, if you say, we get accused of being women haters, well, there are women helping in the organization of this thing.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: So you know there are some women who believe that men ought to be the Senior Pastor.

JEFF: That’s right.

DOYLE: So but I think you need to have in your paper there the influence of laypeople. The involvement of laypeople. Because T.C. is a layman.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: I mean he is a layman. So if you leave laymen out of this picture you miss a big link. Sometimes the pastors were the last ones to come on board. So yeah there were some key pastors in the beginning. Some of those pastors got started because their laymen came to them with a Banner.

JEFF: Uh, yes, cause the ears of the people in Virginia seemed to be through the Religious Herald because that’s the paper they read.

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: So whoever was Editor of the Herald knew, you know, they kind of influenced a lot of people.

DOYLE: And so the Herald speaks for the convention. And that’s why when we organized our communication piece, the Proclaimer I called it. It’s interesting,
Proclaimer is what I changed the newsletter from Liberty Baptist Church where I got that name was from the newsletter of Liberty Baptist Church. And I get that in the mail today, and they still call their newsletter the Proclaimer. And so, but the Proclaimer we decided that it would not be an independent paper. In fact we decided that the independent paper is The Banner. Our paper is going to be a missions magazine and it’s going to tell the story of what we’re doing.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: And not be a political or theological treatise paper.

JEFF: Right.

DOYLE: Or a state paper to tell what fights going on where.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: It was going to be as T.C. and I liked it, he was the bad cop and I was the good cop.

JEFF: Do you know Ann’s, you said Ann, do you know her last name?

DOYLE: Ann.

JEFF: We can ask your wife. She may know when we’re done. Because I did not have Ann down.

DOYLE: Well, let’s see where we are in the story.

JEFF: We’re up to, you know, T.C. played a role, too. You’re getting up to that fellowship time, the vote to be a fellowship. You’re up here at ’92 when this happened about homosexuality, and it got reversed in ’93.

DOYLE: And then in ’95 the key event was the changing of the formula, and I’m sure somebody mentioned that to you.

JEFF: So this became a constitutional change?

DOYLE: They made a constitutional change that we had; most of our churches had changed to where they gave 83 percent to the cooperative program and 17 percent to the BGAV. And so, designating to the SBC doesn’t count towards messengers at the annual meeting of the BGAV. So, that meant representation was greatly reduced at the annual meeting. You didn’t have as many messengers.

JEFF: So some churches went from 15 to 2.
DOYLE: Yes. And some it cut them out totally and they had none.

JEFF: Wow.

DOYLE: So when that happened the meeting of ’95 took place and the motion was made to form a convention. T.C. spoke against it and it was voted down. Terry was the one that made the motion. But then later in ’96 things had kind of gotten, had deteriorated even more and there was more happening. And you got CBF involved in doing this and doing that. I mean it just got really, really bad. So in ’96 we met at Grove Avenue.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: That’s when pulled.

JEFF: That was in April 29th. No, that was in September 16th.

DOYLE: That’s when we pulled the trigger to become a State Convention.

JEFF: Well, let me ask, in light of that, because it seems like you’ve already hit upon back here in ’95 when BGAV changed the constitution by-laws, that kind of the part that broke the camel back?

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: What were things, because that happened in November but it was all the way around to September before they voted to be a convention. What were some of the things going on up to that point?

DOYLE: I think a lot of it was just the CBF had been formed in ’91.

JEFF: Okay.

DOYLE: And there’s speakers, they had speakers on the Alliance of Baptists were another organization that was formed that was really almost activist homosexual. They and we had some, we had women and I don’t know how you’re going to substantiate this, I’ve tried to support this, on paper. We had a lesbian that was pastoring a church in the Roanoke area. And so that was happening. The BGAV said that was a church decision, and that was not their business to deal with. CBF had some speakers on the circuit that were saying all kinds of stuff about the virgin birth, and you know it was a lot of publications. And you find most of those in T.C.’s archives.

JEFF: Yes, see you talk about the work being done for you, it’s just right there.

DOYLE: Yes.
JEFF: Well, let me ask you this, and I’ve ask this of the other men, too.

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: That have been around for a while, was there ever any dialogue between you know SBCV, you guys, before you became a convention and BGAV leaders?

DOYLE: Yes. You need to put in your history the meeting of the 15, committee of 15. I think it was 15. There were like 7 people, 7 conservatives, SBCV was not formed at this time.

JEFF: Right, just the fellowship.

DOYLE: No, I don’t think the fellowship was even formed.

JEFF: It’s before ’93?

DOYLE: I think it’s before ’93.

JEFF: Wow.

DOYLE: But that’s written in history. Some here, that we had done.

JEFF: Okay.

DOYLE: But it’s the committee of I5, Bob Melvin was key to that. Bob was kind of, Bob was the conservative, Bob and Art.

JEFF: So what were they, 7 of conservatives?

DOYLE: 7 conservatives, 7 of moderates they called them.

JEFF: And then somebody.

DOYLE: And then the chairman.

JEFF: Okay.

DOYLE: And they had a meeting and could not, to try to reconcile.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: Tommy can give you.

JEFF: Taylor.
DOYLE: Taylor can give you more on the committee of 15 because he was on it.

JEFF: Okay.

DOYLE: And so, I’m not sure when they met, what year, but I think it was before I got involved. Now, I was involved with Art Ballard and Bob Melvin in the, when I went to the BGAV. Because they got where they wouldn’t let them speak at the board meetings. And I was Treasurer, and I knew Art and I worked with Bob on a loan from the convention. And so, what I did and they got myself in trouble, is I told Dr. Stephenson, my exec, I said, "You need to get these guys." Dr. Stephenson was a passive leader. You know he would not take a position on anything. He would sit there and just let it go like that. So, I got perturbed with him and his inactions. So, I just had a talk with him. I said you really need to let these guys, these guys need to have a talk or your going, or it’s going to cause you more problems than you can shake a stick at. I gave him a warning. These guys can cause big trouble. I was talking about Art Ballard and Bob Melvin.

JEFF: Bob Melvin, yes.

DOYLE: And I said these guys can cause big trouble for you if you don’t let them speak. So he kind of went back to the President of the convention at that time was a real liberal, Bill, I can’t think of his name now. He was Director of Missions up in the Mount Vernon Association, Cumbie, Bill Cumbie. And Bill Cumbie was the one they’d stand up and he would rule them out of order. I mean he just, and they were members of the Board. It wasn’t like they just came in the door, you know. They were members of the Board. And finally, Dr. Stephenson did take the initiative. Bill was gone, Bill Cumbie was gone. And he kind of got the other guy to say you know if somebody wants to speak they need to be able to. We’re Baptists. They need to be able to speak. So I kind of intervened. And then, Art to came in. But Art was so volatile. And he was too, now when Bob spoke, you know he’s a statesman.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: When Art spoke it was like the activist has arrived, you know. And he’s going to cause problems, and he did. He was the one who invited Paige and Dr. Pressler. But you know it’s been going on, the seeds have been going from even back before Adrian in Virginia. And it was primarily over Dr. Ally and abortion, Women in ministry was a little later. But then I’m trying to hit the key points that let up to the convention. ’91 when CBF split, these groups split away so that was one and the BGAV embraced them.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: That’s when people said, "I’m not giving my money to a convention that embraces CBF." So, that was when the budget starting taking the hit is when they started embracing the CBF. Then you’ve got the homosexuality thing in ’92 and ’93. And then you’ve got the formula change. The constitutional change in ’95.
JEFF: ’95.

DOYLE: Then we formed in ’96 there and that’s when the story of the convention begins.

JEFF: Right. Now when CBF, in ’91, did BGAV immediately kind of take them pretty fairly quickly?

DOYLE: Yes, in fact they were even on the speaking, they were doing what they call break-out sessions.

JEFF: Wow.

DOYLE: Down there so it was not, you know, they pretty well openly opposed SBC at that point.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: And supported CBF. You’ve got Rob James who is a professor at, that wrote one of those books you mentioned.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: Rob was a friend of mine but he was really involved in CBF. See, many of the formers of the CBF were here. And then you had some from Texas come in later on. Cecil Sherman, he lives here now.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: He’s still causing problems. He goes around causing problems even to this day.

JEFF: Wow.

DOYLE: He and I used to be back-to-back speakers in churches.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: He’d come in one week and say he needed to drop of the SBC and not have anything to do with this new organization. And I come in the next week and they would use me, primarily some of the liberal churches like Franklin Baptist Church in Franklin was real liberal. That’s where the editor of the Herald came out of there after Julian Pentecost.

JEFF: Yes, and I can tell you, Clingingpeel.
DOYLE: Clingingpeel.

JEFF: Yes, I got it.

DOYLE: Clingingpeel was pastor at Franklin Baptist.

JEFF: Do you remember his first name?

DOYLE: Mike.

JEFF: Mike, because Brother T.C. couldn’t remember his first name.

DOYLE: Michael Clingingpeel, he’s now a pastor at, I think he just retired.

JEFF: Because you had Ruben Ally, the his son Bob Ally.

DOYLE: Robert Ally, yes.

JEFF: And then Julian Pentecost and then Mike Clingingpeel.

DOYLE: Robert Ally is the one that was a professor at the University of Richmond that made such radical statements.

JEFF: Okay. Is Clingingpeel still the editor or have they got somebody new right now?

DOYLE: No, they got a new one now, Jim White.

JEFF: Jim White.

DOYLE: White, and he’s just kind of like a, I’m not sure he’s got a number, he just kind of talks about his aunts, his uncles, and nephew and nieces in his editors. I don’t know if you’ve read any of this stuff. I mean I read now and I’m saying man he’s hard up for news.

JEFF: Well, yes, there’s not a controversy going on.

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: Let me shift gears a little bit, how was the SBCV, Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, how was the name derived? How did ya’ll come about that name?

DOYLE: I was on the Executive Committee, no I was the Treasurer, well the Treasurer was a member of the Executive Committee. So, I had to give the reports of what was happening financially, and so-forth at our Executive Committee meetings. We agreed, see, the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia was derived at Old Forest Baptist
Road Church in that meeting. And I don’t know who. Whether that was in a meeting. So, I wasn’t involved. I don’t know if that was in a meeting prior to that meeting but that was the name that was tossed out.

JEFF: Okay. Because Brother Howard Baldwin told me that he was part of that and at first he was a bit resistant to the conservative part, not that he wasn’t conservative. He was afraid they were going to run off people.

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: But he said in hindsight how all the literature that comes out from here, from the office, it’ll SBC of Virginia. So, it looks like the National Convention. I said, "God had a way of doing that? Didn’t he?"

DOYLE: Yes, yes, and that’s why we went to SBC of Virginia is because conservative now is a terrible thing to have in your name. Because they think you’re Rush Limbaugh, or Hannity.

JEFF: Yes, yes.

DOYLE: And so, if you go now to use the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, some places won’t let you in. Because they think you're a political organization.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: And so I have to explain that all the time to people, you know, that’s not conservative like in Washington.

JEFF: Right.

DOYLE: That’s theologically conservative.

JEFF: That’s right.

DOYLE: And they look at me like.

JEFF: We’ll get down to that a little bit in the doctrinal statement in a little while.

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: Brother Doyle were you involved in the drafting of the Constitution? And I know Brother Martin, D.B. Martin was, so those are people that I need.

DOYLE: D.B. Martin, myself, I don’t remember who.
JEFF: Jess Jackson who’s passed.

DOYLE: Jess was involved in it.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: He was an engineer. So, he was very precise, and he and D.B. were the ones that would scrutinize it. I would look at it from the standpoint, will it work?

JEFF: Right.

DOYLE: They went and worked on the language, D.B. in particular.

JEFF: Okay.

DOYLE: And Jess Jackson.

JEFF: And so you said D.B. lives down at the shore at Virginia Beach. So, I’ll try to contact him.

DOYLE: Chesapeake I think. He’s a member of Bethel I think.

JEFF: Okay.

DOYLE: Baptist Church in Chesapeake.

JEFF: Yes, okay. How did they come up with the purpose statement? You know you see it on-line right now it’s, “The Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia is a fellowship of Southern Baptist Churches, Convention Churches, cooperating to assist local congregations.” You know that one?

DOYLE: Well, that wasn’t our original, that came about when we put together the decentralization.

JEFF: Okay, when Geoff Hammond was helping?

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: Okay.

DOYLE: Yes, the way that came about is that we had an I’ll have to get the correct names of this but we had an Executive Task Force that got together of key people, primarily people I picked. But Executive Task Force got together, and we were going to say you know we’re becoming like every other State Convention and structure. And I said we got to, that just can’t happen, we got to do something. And I said, ”We don’t
have an Association with us." And so, we get criticized as you know we can’t be near the churches. And I said, "We got to get people in this office out of the office put a shop, and we don’t want to build a building and put them in it." So, we needed to become a missions sending organization not a State Convention. For one thing people see us as if you look at BGAV. They see a building full of consultants, waiting for telephone calls from the churches to do something. Well, we said is we need to be more like NAMB and IMB, we’re just a state mission unit. And we need to deploy missionaries to these key areas and that way it will perform a function of an Association and a State Convention together and it would eliminate the middle man. So, it was kind of a business plan is the way I looked at it. I just pitched it primarily to them as here’s a way if I were going to sell hamburgers or I was going to sell insurance. I even used the insurance example. I’d put insurance salesmen in the area working out of their homes to not have an office and every day rather than sit in their office they had to get up or their wife would kick them out the front door. And they’d have to do something so they’d go visit a pastor. And I kind of used analogy basically. And what we decided we were going to do is we were going kick everybody out of the office. There wasn’t but four of us, but four of us, so there wasn’t too many.

JEFF: Right.

DOYLE: We were going to begin to deploy missionaries. Geoff Hammond was, we had done that with Geoff Hammond. We employed Geoff Hammond as.

JEFF: You employed him before you hire him.

DOYLE: Yes, we got him out of Arkansas. And the idea was I had a key church strategy which you might want to see a copy of it’s kind of history now.

JEFF: Okay.

DOYLE: The key church strategy was that we were going to get someone who is, knows how to start churches. And we were going to put them in one of our key churches and we choose First Norfolk and that’s the reason, because that’s where I was.

JEFF: Right.

DOYLE: And they agreed to do it. And we put, got Geoff in, and he became the mission’s person at First Norfolk. And his job description was to start five churches in three years. So I hired him on a three-year contract. And he would be evaluated every year.

JEFF: Yes.
DOYLE: Just like we do now with church planters. So he came in not knowing that he would have more than a three year. If he didn’t do it I don’t know if we, we had the option of not keeping him.

JEFF: Right.

DOYLE: But he did a good job. He did his five. And they’re not all still together but I think three are still together.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: But during that period of time Geoff and I got to know each other more.

JEFF: So, Geoff before he was hired on staff was helping with this. Now, I have some other terms, you know we get down to where the core values are listed, you know, foundation, fellowship, focus. They were the objectives: strength, support, start, send, and now we’re switching over the three M’s. Geoff was instrumental, wasn’t he?

DOYLE: He was a part. He was a consultant.

JEFF: Consultant, okay.

DOYLE: I have, what I did the pastor at First Norfolk, John.

JEFF: Powers.

DOYLE: Powers.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: I went to John Powers and I said John I need some of your, John is a good strategist, thinker. Don’t like him at all but I mean he’s a good, he knows strategy, long-term planning, what do you call it.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: Strategic planning.

JEFF: Planning, yes, yes.

DOYLE: So, I went I’d used Geoff on a contract basis to do some things with me. And that’s how I began. We found out that we work really good together. And I’d just pay him a lump sum for consulting.

JEFF: Right.

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DOYLE: And so, in 2000, he was not on the staff here. He was still at First Norfolk, but I went to John and said John I’d like for the three of us to work on some things. We had this Executive Task Force formed that was taking a survey and stuff. You need to see that survey too.

JEFF: Was it called like an Executive Task Force Survey?

DOYLE: Well, yeah, I think it was. We had two key, we had Executive Task Force and then we had an Implementation Task Force. Kelly Burris was the Chairman of the Implementation Task Force, and I can’t remember who was Chairman of the Executive Task Force. But John was on the Executive Task Force, John Powers. And so I, we were going over this, but you know you can’t a committee trying to put something together, you know, you’d be there forever. So John Powers, Geoff Hammond, and myself hibernated one day down at Williamsburg in a motel. And in three days, I think it was two days, we put together the mission statement, the four strategic objectives, and bullets under each objective. And that’s how that four strategic.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: It was really three people that brought back a recommendation to the Executive Task Force and that’s, and they adopted it.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: And that’s how we got it done.

JEFF: Wow, wow.

DOYLE: We just kind of got off and did some thinking for a period of time and worked it over, and to tell the truth it didn’t change much from when we brought it back. I mean it was, John was a thinker. He was very helpful in that.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: So it was, it was more my business background that kind of thought through the delivery system. You know, how would you deliver a product. Geoff had the missionary piece, you know. How we would train the missionaries, build a team, deploy them, keep them motivated. And he became the professor, he trained. We would hire the men, and he would be like the seminary professor, which he used to be, he would put them in school and build a team. So he was the team builder for the missionaries.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: John was the thinker that kind of got it, helped us get it down on paper. And logically work through the steps.
JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: That’s sort of how that came together.

JEFF: Neat. Tell me about, was it, I always hear it this way the first budget in a restaurant were you involved in that?

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: I just think that’s a little bit comical, but God was doing stuff. So tell me just a little bit about that for fun.

DOYLE: Yes. At first, they had meetings at Shoney’s in the Tidewater area.

JEFF: Was this dealing with the fellowship? Or was this first SBCV trying to get going?

DOYLE: Well, actually their meetings at Shoney’s started before the fellowship.

JEFF: Okay.

DOYLE: That’s kind of built around the Bible Conferences.

JEFF: Okay.

DOYLE: You know, but they’d have meetings, and there was a guy that kind of, John, crazy mind of mine, pastor at, you know him probably.

JEFF: Marks.

DOYLE: Marks, yes. You know him.

JEFF: Yes. As soon as you said that, you know him, I got it.

DOYLE: Yes. John Marks was kind of the layer, he was the coordinator of meetings throughout the state before the convention, or the fellowship ever came about. And they had these meetings in restaurants all over the state and John kind of coordinated. And one of them was in Shoney’s near First Baptist, near Kempsville Baptist Church and First Norfolk. And I would go to that. Kelly and I had become pretty good friends. So Kelly and I would go. I’d go over there some, but I didn’t go a lot. But then after I was elected Treasurer then we had to begin to put the thing together. So we met, I think the first budget was at the Chinese restaurant in Farmville. Tim Pope was the Secretary and we had this budget committee. And we had to draw up the first budget for the fellowship. That was right after I was elected Treasurer. And we probably should have kept that napkin. Everybody says, "Where is that napkin?" Do you think I’d keep a napkin for 12 years?
JEFF: I think I actually have one of the first budgets from Brother Howard in here.

DOYLE: Now Howard, now he, the first budget of the fellowship, now maybe.

JEFF: One that was like $75,000, I have one that was like $75,000.

DOYLE: Right.

JEFF: It’s in this pile here.

DOYLE: Yes. I need to get you, print you out the history of the receipts. The first check that we deposited after the meeting at Old Forest Road was like $356.

JEFF: You were rich then buddy.

DOYLE: And now I told the staff, and we got a lot of new staff. So, Geoff kind of wanted me to give some history to the staff in a meeting the other day, just to facilitate what I said. I brought the history of the receipts in there. And we’ve gone to $356 our first check to having sent over 75 million dollars to the Cooperative Program.

JEFF: Wow, that’s incredible, that’s incredible.

DOYLE: And then if you figure Lottie Moon.

JEFF: Yes, on top of that, yes.

DOYLE: And Annie Armstrong.

JEFF: Annie Armstrong.

DOYLE: It’s over 100 million dollars.

JEFF: Well, then on top of that, and you know this because you’ve been there, disaster relief.

DOYLE: Yes, if you add it all it’s over 100 million dollars that we’ve.

JEFF: In 13 years.

DOYLE: In 13 years.

JEFF: Wow, that’s incredible, that’s a God thing, that’s a God thing.

DOYLE: It’s really something.
JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: I think that kind of gets the key elements that brought about the vote in ’96. And that’s what you really wanted to kind of get the key elements.

JEFF: That’s right.

DOYLE: It’s the publications by the CBF, the embracing of BGAV of the CBF.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: The formation of the seminary, this is a key one.

JEFF: The Richmond Seminary.

DOYLE: Richmond Seminary.

JEFF: Oh, that’s right.

DOYLE: That’s it.

JEFF: I did have T.C. talk to me about that.

DOYLE: That’s in 1990 I think.

JEFF: Was it? Okay. I can probably go on-line and see when they founded.

DOYLE: And so it’s that a key thing.

JEFF: I keep telling Brother Howard Baldwin that they’re not going to let him live down his infamous toxic waste dump statement in Richmond. We don’t need a toxic waste dump. He just laughs. I’ve got him laughing on my recording about that.

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: Well, let me ask you this okay, I only have a few more questions.

DOYLE: Okay.

JEFF: Because this is . . . You’ve given me tons of . . . I knew you would tons of information.

DOYLE: Yes.
JEFF: Brother T.C. did, and I’m sure Brother Kelly and those like that will too. SBCV has a very strong doctrinal statement and added to that of course is the Baptist Faith Message 2000 after that was approved. I just wanted to read the first part of the statement and then just make some comments if you would why that is real important for SBCV. “We believe that the Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God and sufficient as our only infallible rule of faith and practice.”

DOYLE: Yes. I think the reason that was written the way it was is that a number of the seminary professors and this think is really a lot about theological education in seminaries.

JEFF: That’s what Brother Howard told me.

DOYLE: Yes, I mean it’s not so much about what’s going on in the churches as what’s going on at the seminaries. But a lot of the professors would not say that it’s verbally inspired. That was offensive to a lot of them. Because that just you know that God spoke and the world was created, you know, where it says that in the Scripture. Well, first of all they believe in evolution so that’s all.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: But God speaking it lends too much of it to God and too little to.

JEFF: Chance.

DOYLE: Well it’s like Paul, they would say Paul is inspired but those are Paul’s words. When Jesus speaks it’s like they believe in the red print but the other print they can say that Jesus didn’t say anything about that subject. Then it’s really you can’t build a doctrine around it.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: For example Paul talks about homosexuality in Romans 1.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: Jesus never spoke about homosexuality. So, homosexuals says, "There’s no problem with me being a Christian and a Jesus follower because Jesus never criticized or spoke against it." Inspired, every word is, is every word. You can’t pick and choose. It’s you know it’s either all inspired word by word or it’s who’s going to pick out the words that don’t apply.

JEFF: Yes.
DOYLE: You know you just can’t, it’s all or nothing. If unless you’re going to assume that you know enough to spot what’s inspired in there or what’s inherent. If you’re so smart that you think you can pick out what’s God’s word and what’s not then you’re too smart, or you think you’re too smart.

JEFF: Personally, I’m really glad you have that strong statement.

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: You know my background really was Independent Baptist almost to the legalistic side. You know but they normally have very strong stances on the Word of God.

DOYLE: Yes. And it doesn’t mean that every word in there, there’s going to be different accounts like in the Old Testament like where one writer saw 14,000 out there fighting, and another somewhere else says there’s 13,000.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: That doesn’t mean there’s an error in the Bible.

JEFF: Right.

DOYLE: So there is a human element.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: But it’s every word is important.

JEFF: We usually some of those would go verbally plenary.

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: Which you know is getting to the words themselves.

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: And we will say in the original autographs.

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: You know which in our modern translations there’s a few that has nothing to do with doctrine.

DOYLE: No.
JEFF: Some of the few variances has nothing to do with doctrine.

DOYLE: Yes. So, you know if I were, if we were revising this, I’d probably take it out and leave it just like the Baptist Faith and Message 2000.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: Because it’s a lightening rod that I think that causes more, well, even to use the word inerrant has become that word the other side over here, the other convention would say I believe the Bible is without error. So why do you insist that I use the word inerrant. It’s not even in the dictionary. What’s the difference between inerrant and the Bible without error. Which I think they’ve got a point there that probably Paige Patterson would not agree with me on. But I think sometimes I think they’re using it sometimes to differentiate a conservative from a moderate.

JEFF: Right.

DOYLE: And it has some value. T.C. would disagree with me on that. But I don’t see much difference myself.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: If they truly believe that the Bible is without error, because inerrant means without error.

JEFF: That’s right.

DOYLE: So it’s kind of a translation of the word inerrant.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: But if you start telling me that there are errors in the Bible then you know I’ve got a problem.

JEFF: That’s where my problem comes in, right.

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: Let me jump to a different thing because as these interviews have gone on other things have popped up stimulated my mind and others. SBCV went right-a-way to a 50/50 giving track split with Cooperative Program, with the National Convention and
what stays in the state. How did that come about? Or just elaborate why that’s
important? And still giving that now SBCV and then the Texas Convention that has
started the new one is 55.

DOYLE: 55.

JEFF: But elaborate on that Brother Doyle.

DOYLE: Well, when we formed the first budget on the napkin at the Chinese
Restaurant. I think, now that’s after the meeting in February when I became involved.
Now, there’s probably a budget for the Bible Conference that Howard was involved in.

JEFF: Right.

DOYLE: But when we did that, and then we in ’96 decided to form the convention then
my assignment. They elected me and my assignment was to bring back what we needed
to do to become a convention. So, that was my job. So, what I did is to go back to what
I always knew at the old convention. Was that the amount going to the missionaries and
to the national causes was on a decline and more and more was being held in the State
Conventions to fund their ministries. And so the percentage, and I knew the history well
enough that the originally history when it was formed in 1925 was that every state had
agreed to do a 50/50. So, the Cooperative Program when it was formed that was sort of
the agreement among the founders of the Cooperative Program that the states would
share on a 50/50 basis. So, I suggested to the group we drew the budget up I said from
now on we ought to do 50/50 and never go down. And so far nobody has ever made a
recommendation. They made a recommendation to go up, but they’ve never made a
recommendation to go down.

JEFF: Right.

DOYLE: And there’s some reasons for not going up and this is for your own
information. My friend Jim Richards who’s in the Exec. of the Conservatives in Texas I
think he went to 51 just to get one up on us. He was formed two years after us.

JEFF: Right.

DOYLE: And so I’ve always said to Jim, I said you just want to beat us, you don’t really
care much about the Cooperative Program, you just want to be number one. I just kid
him one like that. But he’s moving in that direction. And here’s why we can’t. We have
a hard time doing that. I would like to do that. But the reason we have a hard time doing
that is that we don’t have Associations.

JEFF: Right.

DOYLE: Jim has, Texas has 117 Cooperating Associations.
JEFF: Wow.

DOYLE: We had one, and that was the one that has Galax in it. So when we formed we only had one association that would even hardly talk to us. All they’d do is talk bad about us. And so, we could not cooperate with the Associations. They weren’t doing anything anyway. So, we didn’t want to be a part of them anyway. So, the best thing that ever happened to us was they didn’t like us, and didn’t want to be a part of us. But the thing about it is if you don’t have Associations, then you don’t have a delivery system with part of the organization near a church.

JEFF: And that’s why the decentralization was so important.

DOYLE: And that’s why we couldn’t be like other State Conventions. So, that’s why I had that Executive Task Force come along and say you know we got to do something. Because we’re sitting here in Richmond, and there’s churches out there saying, "We need help." And we can’t help them. We don’t have anything in place to help them with. And the association there wants to help them, but they don’t want to be a part of the association because it’s liberal. And so that’s why in 2000 we formed that group to look at how can we, I called it how can we develop a delivery system of services and ministries.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: And but the thing about it is Jim and his group out there they start 150 churches a year. But in reality they don’t start any. Because all those churches are started by Associations.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: See, Associations start churches not State Conventions.

JEFF: And here it’s different.

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: One of the questions I know we’re going to get to is church planting. Because here you know the beauty of it is churches planting churches. I mean Brother Geoff Hammond just drove that into us, but it’s the truth.

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: In reality it’s a church that births a church.
DOYLE: Right. And conventions don’t start churches and Associations don’t start churches. But churches, historically Baptist, are started by Associations. That’s why they call them Director of Missions.

JEFF: Okay, I didn’t know that.

DOYLE: And so State Conventions helped with starting churches but churches start churches and Associations help churches start churches.

JEFF: Okay.

DOYLE: If you don’t have Associations then what are you going to do? Well you can’t do it. You can’t do it from one location in Richmond. And so, that’s why the decentralization thing. And I went back to business model if I had had hamburgers to sell, and I wanted to sell hamburgers down in the Tidewater area I wouldn’t. It would be stone cold, dead stone old Big Mac if I had to deliver a Big Mac down to the Tidewater area.

JEFF: That’s right.

DOYLE: And nobody wouldn’t want to buy it anyway. So, you would have to have some delivery system to where you can keep a hot product and a salesman down there to deliver it.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: So, it just makes sense that if you’re doing ministry you need to be near the churches.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: And if we had Associations we probably would have never done that.

JEFF: Right.

DOYLE: They do by and large what Associations do. That’s why Jim and his group out there they can increase to 60 percent or they could probably increase to 65 or 70 percent because churches give money to the Associations to start churches.

JEFF: Right, on top of what they give to, that is correct.
DOYLE: So they give ten percent to the State Convention and they give five percent to the association. Well, we don’t even get ten percent. So for us to increase this.

JEFF: Right.

DOYLE: We eat up our church planting funds.

JEFF: Right. Let’s go over to that question.

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: I think some of the core values and objectives that the SBCV had in the mist of those has been church planting.

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: But of the others we got money coming into the State Convention here.

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: 50 percent is going on nationally, of that 50 percent about half of that goes into church planting.

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: So, it’s been a key thing for this convention. And I want you to elaborate on why. And what’s happening, and what are the success, and all of those kinds of things.

DOYLE: The fifth core value is church planting is our future or something like that.

JEFF: Yes, it’s right here, yes.

DOYLE: It’s not everything but it’s our future. Because if we don’t start, see most state conventions are dying nationwide. There are very few that aren’t having deep financial challenges. There are big buildings like just here are half empty because they’re having to lay off staff. And they don’t wake up as to what the problem is. They go back to the churches, existing churches and say you need to give us more money.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: And the church is sitting there saying man our costs are going up and we need staff too. And they need, we have to pay our staff more, they have to pay more to live, we can’t give more. You can’t get more out of us. And many of them they’re having to give up doing what they’re doing because they’re having such a hard time where they are.
JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: And so logic how are you going to survive as a State Convention? You got to start more churches. You can squeeze these. See, BGAV has got about the same number of churches they had back when I worked with them 30 years ago.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: That’s because they don’t start any churches. We start more churches in a year then they started in the last five years. But it’s our future. It’s not just us. It’s the future of the Southern Baptist Convention. The IMB woke up several years ago that they weren’t to be pastors on the foreign field. And they are church planters.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: You go internationally there they count how many churches they’ve started. They don’t count how many people that they, how many members they got in their church. See, it used to be a missionary go, and he would be pastor of the church.

JEFF: That’s right.

DOYLE: You can’t, there’s no way you’re going to change America or change the world if you don’t start more churches. I don’t care if you’ve got 50 churches in a small town somewhere there’s still lost people in that town.

JEFF: That’s right.

DOYLE: That these other churches can’t reach. And that’s why I say, and that’s why the Baptist have such a hard time with church planting and I say start a church right next to one if that one is not reaching people then you need do something. So, that’s why I say church planting not only our future, its’ the future of the Southern Baptist Convention. But in particular it is our future if we want to continue to grow and not have to be laying off people here and not starting new churches.

JEFF: Yes. Well, tell me about the resource wise that you that the convention pours into church planting. How does that take place? What kind of resources do you pour in and those kinds of things?

DOYLE: Well, what we do is that the receipts that come in we’re committed to the 50/50 thing.

JEFF: Yes.
DOYLE: We’re committed to trying to keep the staff, the support staff to a minimum. We won’t let missionaries in this building. The only two people who office out of here are Geoff and myself.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: And we’re sort of administration. But missionaries are out. Missionaries need to work in the field. They don’t need to work in the office building. And so what we say is we’re going to keep the expenses down here so we got more money for church planting.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: Not just church planting. I mean that’s we’re misunderstood in thinking that all we think about is starting new churches. Well, if you don’t have a healthy existing church you’re not going to start it because churches start churches. So if we don’t help do church health than our church planting efforts are going to be curtailed.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: So we’ve got to do what Steve Bradshaw and his team does.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: Because we go to do, we got to keep our churches healthy. And a church is not healthy unless it’s reproducing. See, it wasn’t intended that churches would just hibernate within their four walls and never start another church. I mean that just doesn’t, they ought to be starting a church somewhere even if it’s in Africa. Because that’s the key evangelism tool to reaching the world. And even if you went and evangelized the entire world you got to put them in a church.

JEFF: A local body, yes.

DOYLE: To disciple.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: Or all you did is get a baptism or a convert and probably died on the vine somewhere along the way.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: So you got to have churches to reach other churches and to disciple.
JEFF: So in the process of all this church planting you try to get a church, a healthy church, to partner with you.

DOYLE: And we want to work as hard at increasing the health of churches. And we do in starting new churches. Because there’s no need to start a new church if it’s not going to be healthy.

JEFF: Well, how do the resources?

DOYLE: Well, we just guard it.

JEFF: Well, you have like 50 percent. So, how? What are various ways that resources are used in starting churches? Like, I’ll give some ideas and you can talk about them. Like I know you have, like I said, “If I planting a church, and I was going to be somewhere in a building, and I needed sound system and chairs and stuff, you guys have those kinds of resources. I think you have some sound stuff, right?

DOYLE: Well, we will help. We will partner with a church plant to help them get a sound system.

JEFF: Okay, okay.

DOYLE: We don’t provide 100 percent of everything.

JEFF: Okay.

DOYLE: We feel like it’s not healthy for the church.

JEFF: Right, right.

DOYLE: If you give it a sound system they won’t take care of our sound system.

JEFF: Right.

DOYLE: But they will take care of theirs.

JEFF: Right.

DOYLE: And so what we will do is help them. But most of those resources go towards salaries for the church planters.

JEFF: That’s what I was going to come back to. You have church planters.

DOYLE: We’ve got about two million dollars that goes for personnel.
JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: And personnel includes Custalow.

JEFF: Right.

DOYLE: You know if he’s in church planting, everything that’s church planting gets allocated to church planting. So the 50 percent not talking about just cash handed out.

JEFF: That’s right, that’s right.

DOYLE: Cash handed out to the churches; it includes a percentage of office here.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: We prorate the cost, the cost accounting; prorate the cost over the ministry areas based on the percentages of their expenses. And so that’s how we come up with the 55 percent for the Cooperative. Because part of time is church planting. So you shouldn’t charge me off over here totally because part of me is church planting.

JEFF: Right.

DOYLE: When Geoff was here because the way we were organized at that point. I charged all his salary to church planting because that was what he was doing.

JEFF: Absolutely.

DOYLE: I charge all mine. I charged 50/50 because I was in the healthy churches half the time and I was in the church plants the other times.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: So, we did some allocations to do that.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: So, that 50 percent people have to understand and I disclose that in the Books of Reports.

JEFF: Right.

DOYLE: That it’s allocated on there. If you allocate what we spend, it works out to about 50/55 percent towards church planting.

JEFF: Yes.
DOYLE: And what were going to try to do is to keep that around to 50 percent.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: There’s going to come a time when that’s not happening because we don’t have excesses. And that’s the story that you need hear. In the early days, when we didn’t have much going on, we had excess receipts. And what we said is if anything left over at the end of the year is restricted for church planting and so we stuck it back. And we were still operating out of that. We’ve have to dig into that what I call, "Opportunity Funds."

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: We’ve had to dig into that for two years in a row. We’re trying by 2011 we’re probably going to run out of those funds. But we’ve got to get on a pay as you go basis in around 2011 or 2012.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: So, those funds, those excess funds, we had from early years, they enabled us to grow more rapidly. But our growth is going to be curtailed somewhat when those funds are gone.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: But we still can give 50 percent for church planting. It’s just we won’t start as many churches.

JEFF: Right, right. And one of the statements that I’ve heard you say at an annual meeting I think on many occasions is the fact that, you know, it was never our desire to go after BGAV churches. If they came and wanted to align with what we stood for the convention was going to have to be built on starting new churches.

DOYLE: Exactly.

JEFF: You know.

DOYLE: And that’s because these other churches were not interested in evangelism or starting churches, and we didn’t want them to join. I mean why would you want a dead church to mess up your numbers.

JEFF: Right.

DOYLE: Your statistics, those people needed to know what our purpose and our vision was before they joined. And so therefore we made it pretty tough for some of them in the
beginning. Some in the beginning we would say you’re barking up the wrong tree. You’re not going to like being with us. We kind of talked them out of joining. And so we didn’t really have much of a problem not many of them wanted to join anyway. But what we wanted, we wanted churches that were interested in evangelism.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: And that’s why we got most of big churches because they’re big for a reason.

JEFF: Yes, that’s right.

DOYLE: Everything’s listed.

JEFF: That’s right.

DOYLE: Those little small churches out here that are dying on the vine they’re not evangelist they won’t be happy with us because what they envision is totally different from what we envision. We’re all about reaching people, Baptisms.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: And they’re playing church and normally fighting over it, and you’ve been through that.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: And then we’ll consider if we’ll go in but it’s, we’ve always said that the church is autonomous.

JEFF: Right.

DOYLE: And the convention is autonomous, too. So, we don’t have to let you join.

JEFF: Right. Well, tell me then, I’ve got just a couple of other things running through my brain. What’s been some of the, I think this year is 13 years.

DOYLE: Yes.
JEFF: What’s some of the, you don’t have to give everything, what are some things that you would say were highlights. You know, from when things first became a convention up through to now?

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: Some of the results, you know, we’ve been talking about results and things of that nature.

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: Like I can give one, all the people come back to this one, from the first budget to where it is today.

DOYLE: I think the thing that’s most; it’s hard to understand really, I mean I’m really perplexed. Like you said only God could do it. And that is how we, how excited people were in the beginning and even to this day. We had more people at our annual meeting than the Georgia Baptist Convention with its 5,000 churches. Now would we have a 1,000 people and they’d have 800 and they’ve got 5,000 churches. My son went to their meeting. He call me he said, "Daddy, that is the most pitiful thing I believe I’ve ever been to." He said it was boring, it was a waste of time, and it’s no wonder there wasn’t but 800 people there.

JEFF: I think what I’ll do Brother when I get to Florida I’m going to go to the first meeting and I’ll call you and tell you about that one, too.

DOYLE: Tell me about that one. I think Florida is a little bit better. But I think it amazes me that the people stay so enthusiastic. Because I never really anticipated that it would continue with that kind of enthusiasm.

JEFF: I think I’ve been to every meeting. I can’t remember I think I was there when you voted to be a convention at Grove.

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: And the only convention I know is SBCV.

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: And I came out independent and you’ve heard this over and over again, it’s like going to a revival.

DOYLE: Yes.
JEFF: Particularly if you change the format a little bit later on where it was, that’s put the business in between good singing and good preaching.

DOYLE: And the reason we’ve been able to do that is that we weren’t buried with the Constitution and By-law that required us to do this and do that, and read all these boring reports.

JEFF: Right.

DOYLE: And you know a convention is more for inspiration that it is for information.

JEFF: Right.

DOYLE: And because to me it’s a time to get excited about what God’s doing through the churches and through the convention. And it’s not a time, who wants to go and listen to somebody read a report. I just have never understood why they didn’t catch on. Now BGAV, I don’t know what’s going on at their meetings now. But I think they’ve upped it a little bit. They started doing some workshops.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: And so maybe they’ll catch on that there is reason why people come to ours. And or stay excited it’s because it’s inspiration. It’s some information but it’s not hour after hour after hour of people reading a piece of paper.

JEFF: And then a lot of times ya’ll like the reports are done basically video reports.

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: Do them in advance.

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: Get it introduced by the person who’s over it, share a little bit, and then boom here’s what’s happening.

DOYLE: If business last more than 30 minutes man you’ve got, it’s like a sermon more than 30 minutes you better watch it some people are going to tune you out.

JEFF: Okay, I’ve got one more thought.

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: You’ve given me, graciously given me a lot of time Brother. And I needed to pick your brain with the position you’re at. You may be able to comment on this or not.
DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: The role that you play now, I think there’s some kind of foundation or something.

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: You had a dream for the future.

DOYLE: Yes.

JEFF: Can you share any about that?

DOYLE: Yes. Well, five years ago, well, it’s longer than that now. Well, but after about five years as a convention I knew that one day these funds are going to disappear. And so almost every State Convention has a foundation. So we formed the foundation to do that. I thought I could do more than, I’ve always took on more than I could do. And what that results in is that a lot of things don’t get done. So I formed two subsidiaries: the Church Ministry Services and the Foundation. Church Ministry Services was started because of our church planting efforts. One of the major problems that new church starts have is that they don’t have any administration and the planter gets himself in trouble with taxes.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: They don’t have, they don’t know what to do. They do a lot of things illegal. They don’t understand risk management so they expose themselves to liabilities that they need to do that. So the ministry service thing was started to loan money to church plants one thing. The second thing was to come along side church plants and be like a business administrator for the church plant.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: So now we have Jill out here who’s the church Treasurer for about 50 church plants. And we do their bookkeeping.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: We do their payroll, we’re their tax advisor and so we’re their administrative arm. What I tell the church planters is you need to be out kneecap to kneecap with some prospect not sitting in your office trying to figure out how to fill out the newsletter or tax return.

JEFF: Right.
DOYLE: And so what were going to do is take that load off of you for $50 a month, it’s not going to be free.

JEFF: Still not that much.

DOYLE: $50 a month we’ll come along side of you and we’ll do, we’ll make sure you don’t go to jail. And we’ll take care of your payroll, put your money in the black. You just keep on doing what you’re supposed to be doing don’t become the administrator. And so that was the vision for ministry services. The foundation of course I just want, when I retired I wanted to be a fundraiser so that we can get lots, huge amounts of money for church planting.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: By and large church planting, and so those two were my idea that once when I retired that I would move over into these two organizations develop them sort of like SBCV try to get it up to where I can, we can hire a full-time Executive Director for the Foundation.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: Right now we can’t afford one, and Executive Director. So we got to raise some money for the Foundation and for Ministry Services so they will be self-sustaining.

JEFF: Yes.

DOYLE: And it’s close, my goal is by the time I’m 70 and a half.

JEFF: And how old are you now?

DOYLE: I’m 67 and a half.

JEFF: Okay.

DOYLE: Both of those ought to be self-supporting.

JEFF: That’s great.

DOYLE: But whether that happens or not the economy is really thrown us for a loop.

JEFF: Sure. Brother is there anything you want to add.
DOYLE: No, I think you got it. The only thing is I’ve got a lot of stuff around here. I don’t know if you want to come back another time and go through the library.

JEFF: Absolutely. Thank you so much for letting me do this and having your time.

DOYLE: Okay.
Appendix B

Number of Cooperating Clients

Excess Receipts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1998</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2000</th>
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<tr>
<td>Things and Children's Camps</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Expenses</td>
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<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning Balance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Costs</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H. Treasurer's Report

Financial Statement (unaudited)

1997: Revenue: $1,000
1998: Revenue: $2,000
1999: Revenue: $1,000
2000: Revenue: $500

Gross Income: $6,000
Net Income: $4,000
Net Income before Taxes: $2,000
Taxes: $1,000
Net Income after Taxes: $1,000

Statement of Financial Position

Assets

Cash: $1,000
Accounts Receivable: $2,000
Inventory: $1,000
Prepaid Expenses: $500
Total Assets: $5,500

Liabilities

Accounts Payable: $1,000
Notes Payable: $2,000
Total Liabilities: $3,000

Net Worth: $2,500

Statement of Cash Flows

Cash flows from operating activities

Cash received from customers: $5,500
Cash paid to employees: $2,000
Cash paid for taxes: $1,000
Net cash provided by operating activities: $2,500

Cash flows from investing activities

Purchases of property, plant, and equipment: $1,000
Sale of property, plant, and equipment: $2,000
Net cash used in investing activities: $300

Cash flows from financing activities

Issuance of common stock: $1,000
Redemption of bonds payable: $2,000
Net cash provided by financing activities: $100

Net increase in cash and cash equivalents: $2,600
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of period: $1,000
Cash and cash equivalents at end of period: $3,600
ARTICLES OF AMENDMENT
RESTATED ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION
OF SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONSERVATIVES OF VIRGINIA, INC.

1. The name of the corporation is Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia.

2. The objectives and purposes for which the corporation is formed are religious.

   A. The Corporation shall not be operated for profit. It may engage only in activities that may be carried on by an organization exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and by a corporation to which contributions are deductible under Sections 170(c), 2055 and 2522 of the Code. To the extent consistent with Section 501(c)(3) of the Code, the Corporation may exercise any and all powers conferred upon nonstock corporations by Sections 13.1-826 and -827 of the Virginia Nonstock Corporation Act.

   B. No substantial part of the activities of the Corporation shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting, to influence legislation (except as otherwise permitted by Section 501(h) of the Internal Revenue Code), and the Corporation shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements), any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition of any candidate for public office.

   C. No part of the net earnings of the Corporation shall inure to the benefit of any trustee or officer of the Corporation, or any person having a personal or private interest in the activities of the Corporation, except that the Corporation may pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and may make payments of distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article 2.

   D. Upon dissolution, after all creditors of the Corporation have been paid, the assets of the Corporation shall be distributed to one or more organizations which qualify as an exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code and which share the doctrinal position of the corporation as set forth in its Constitution.

3. The corporation shall have no “members” as that term is used by the Virginia Nonstock Corporation Act. The Corporation is a Baptist general body and shall have church affiliates who shall enjoy the rights provided in the Corporation’s Constitution and Bylaws.

4. All corporate powers shall be exercised by or under the authority of, and the business of the corporation managed under the direction of, its board of directors (which shall sometimes be referred to as the Executive Board or Board of Trustees, and the
directors shall sometimes be referred to as “trustees,”) subject to the limitations of the authority of the board of directors and subject to the vesting of authority in the messengers constituting the Convention, all as contained in these Articles and the Constitution and Bylaws.

5. The board of directors, which shall have no less than three (3) and no more than thirty (30) voting directors which fairly represent the areas/regions of this Convention per the Constitution and Bylaws, shall be composed of persons who shall be elected by the messengers constituting the Convention as provided in the Constitution and Bylaws, plus the President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Secretary, and Executive Director, and the chairs of the three (3) standing committees of the Convention, each of whom shall serve ex officio with all voting and other rights of a director. A vacancy occurring on the board of directors, including a vacancy resulting from an increase in the number of directors shall be filled by the messengers.

6. A director's term of office shall be three (3) years unless a director is elected to a term of fewer years to accomplish a board composed of persons who will have terms expiring in each year.

7. To the full extent allowed by the Virginia Nonstock Corporation Act in force on the date of these Articles, the Corporation shall indemnify against liability, and advance reasonable expenses to, any individual who was, is, or is threatened to be named a defendant or respondent in any threatened, pending, or completed action, suit or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, and whether formal or informal, because he is or was a trustee, or while a trustee, is or was serving at the Corporation's request as an officer, partner, trustee, employee, or agent of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, employee benefit plan, or other enterprise. The Corporation may (but shall not be required to) indemnify, and advance reasonable expenses to an officer, employee, or agent of the Corporation who is not a trustee to the same extent as if he were a trustee.

8. The messengers constituting the Convention, and not the Executive Board, shall have the authority to amend the Articles of Incorporation, Constitution and Bylaws, and to authorize merger, dissolution, and the sale, lease, exchange, or other disposition of all, or substantially all, of the assets of the Corporation, otherwise than in the usual and regular course of business, and shall exercise this authority upon the vote of the messengers registered and voting and otherwise as provided in the Constitution and Bylaws. It shall require a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote to change these Articles of Incorporation.

9. The Amendments to the Restated Articles were recommended by the Board of directors and adopted by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the messengers of the Convention on November 12, 2002.
CONSTITUTION
Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia
Adopted November 2003

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this organization shall be Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, hereinafter sometimes referred to as SBCV.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

As an autonomous state convention cooperating with the Southern Baptist Convention, the SBCV is a fellowship of Southern Baptist Convention churches cooperating to assist local congregations in their task of fulfilling the Great Commission as commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE III – DOCTRINAL POSITION

We believe that the Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God, wholly without error as originally given by God, and is sufficient as our only infallible rule of faith and practice. We deny that other books are inspired by God in the same way as the Bible. The fundamental truths to which we are committed are expressed in The Baptist Faith and Message, 2000 with the clarification of inerrancy as described above. The doctrinal position of the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia shall not be binding upon any local church; however, the Convention recognizes its right and responsibility to determine its identity, including doctrinal parameters, and to include within its affiliation those churches who can freely agree with it, and to exclude those churches who do not. All employed staff of the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia are expected to agree with and fully support the body's doctrinal position and shall complete a signed statement of doctrinal affinity. Failure to demonstrate concurrence with the doctrinal stance of the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia shall be sufficient reason for termination of employment of any employee of the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia.

ARTICLE IV – RELATIONSHIPS

While autonomous in its own affairs, Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, recognizing the autonomy of other Baptist bodies, disclaims all right of exercising authority over any church, association, or convention. However, the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia may rescind the affiliation of any church, which shall, in the judgment of Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, depart in doctrine or practice from the affiliation qualifications set forth in the Constitution and Bylaws.
Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia is open to cooperation with other Christian bodies insofar as the SBCV determines that such cooperation does not compromise the doctrinal stance of the SBCV.

ARTICLE V – AFFILIATION

A. Affiliation Qualifications: An affiliated church must agree with the foundational beliefs of this Convention set forth in the Constitution and Bylaws. Affiliated churches must actively cooperate with the work of the SBCV through regular financial support.

B. Method of Church's Becoming Affiliated:

1. Any Baptist church desiring affiliation in this body shall complete an affiliation application indicating agreement with the doctrinal position of the SBCV and make an initial contribution to the SBCV. Such application must be received at the state office at least two months prior to the annual meeting.

2. All churches having submitted an affiliation application shall be examined by the Executive Board (or a designated subcommittee thereof) as to their qualifications. If found acceptable, the Executive Board will grant provisional affiliation status to the applicant church. The Executive Board will present all applicant churches to the next annual meeting with an affirmative or negative recommendation.

3. All churches receiving at least 3/4 affirmative majority at the annual meeting shall be welcomed to affiliation.

C. Representation at Meetings of This Body.

1. Each affiliated church shall be entitled to send messengers to the meetings of this body and these messengers shall constitute the Convention. Each affiliated church shall be entitled to two (2) messengers. The number of messengers after the first two shall be calculated as follows: One additional messenger for every two hundred fifty (250) members; or for each $250 given to the work of the SBCV with the total number of messengers not exceeding fifteen (15). Giving shall be determined for the most recent twelve-month period for which giving records are available.

2. All messengers from affiliated churches must be members in good standing of the church which sends them.

3. The messengers seated by the body in its annual or any special meeting shall constitute the Convention.
E. Termination of Affiliation

Any affiliated church may withdraw from this body at its discretion. This body may revoke a church's affiliation should that church cease to concur with the body's doctrinal position.

The Executive Board shall have all doctrinal disputes and issues related to the seating of messengers arising on the Convention floor immediately referred to them for study without further discussion. The results of such studies shall be presented to the Convention not later than the next annual meeting. It is required that anyone with a doctrinal concern should indicate the same in writing by letter to the Executive Director two (2) months prior to the Convention.

ARTICLE VI – FRATERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia welcomes individuals who are members of non-affiliated churches to attend any of its general meetings insofar as seating will allow. Such individuals may attend but may not vote, speak to business matters, or hold any elected office within the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia.

ARTICLE VII – MEETINGS

This body (the messengers constituting the Convention) shall meet at least annually at such time and place as may be designated at a preceding annual meeting. Additional meetings may be called by a two-thirds vote of the Executive Board.

ARTICLE VIII – AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended by the messengers constituting the Convention at any annual meeting of Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia by two-thirds vote of those voting, provided that notice of the proposed amendment shall have been given at the preceding annual meeting and published in the minutes of the annual meeting.

ARTICLE IX – PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern SBCV, its meetings of messengers constituting the Convention, committees and Executive Board, in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the articles of incorporation, Constitution and Bylaws and any special rules of order the messengers or Executive Board respectively may adopt.
ARTICLE I - OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

A. General requirements for officers, Executive Board members and all other elected or appointed positions.

To be elected or appointed to any position, an individual must be a member of an affiliated church that is in good standing with the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia. Further, all those filling elected positions (i.e. officers, Executive Board and elected committee members) shall be required to sign a statement of concurrence with the doctrinal position of the SBCV.

B. Officers.

The officers of the SBCV Convention shall be a President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Secretary, and Executive Director-Treasurer, plus other officers as deemed necessary by the body. In accordance with the Restated Articles of Incorporation, these officers shall be ex officio members of the Executive Board with full voting rights.

The Executive Director shall be elected by the Executive Board and confirmed at a called or next annual meeting of the Convention, to serve until termination either by resignation, retirement, or by decision of the Executive Board.

The Executive Director shall serve as Treasurer of the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia. In the event there is a vacancy in the position of Executive Director-Treasurer, the Executive Board shall elect an individual to fill the temporary position of Interim Executive Director-Treasurer until such time as the position of Executive Director-Treasurer is filled. All other officers shall be elected annually by the messengers constituting the Convention and shall serve without remuneration for the position except for reasonable expenses with adequate documentation. No individual (except the Executive Director-Treasurer) shall serve more than two consecutive one-year terms in the same office.

C. Duties of Officers.

1. The President of the Convention shall preside over the deliberations of the Annual Meeting, appoint the Convention committees as provided for in Bylaws, Article IV and their chairmen and such other duties as may be assigned to him by the Executive Board.

2. The Vice Presidents, in order, may, in the absence of the President, or when requested by the President, preside over the Annual Meeting and shall perform other duties as requested by the President.

3. The Secretary of the Convention shall keep accurate minutes of all sessions of the Annual Meeting and shall perform other duties as requested by the President. He shall cause these to be published in suitable form in the annual report of the
Convention together with such other information as the Annual Meeting or the Executive Board deems necessary. He shall also compile and make available the official minutes of all statewide meetings, providing a copy to each member of the Executive Board.

4. The Executive Director-Treasurer shall serve as the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Financial Officer of the Convention and shall cooperate and coordinate with the Executive Board to implement the affairs and actions of the Convention. He shall have such other authority, as the Executive Board shall authorize for the normal operation of the corporation.

**ARTICLE II - EXECUTIVE BOARD**

A. Composition.

The body shall, at its Annual Meeting, elect an Executive Board as recommended by the Convention Nominating Committee. In addition to the officers serving ex officio, this Board shall have no less than three (3) and no more than thirty (30) voting members, who fairly represent the areas/regions of this Convention as determined by the Executive Board. An effort will be made to insure that Board membership shall be both lay and ministerial with not less than one-third from either category. The members of the Executive Board shall constitute themselves at their first meeting after election, electing the Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Secretary, and constituting the various committees. The Chairman shall not be eligible to serve more than two consecutive one-year terms in that office. No person shall be eligible to be elected Chairman who has not served for the previous year as a member of the Executive Board. The President of the Convention cannot serve as Chairman of the Executive Board. No paid staff of the Corporation shall be elected as an officer or director except for the Executive Director-Treasurer.

B. Term of office.

Elected Executive Board members shall serve three-year terms and be eligible for re-election to a second three-year term. Individuals completing a second consecutive three-year term will not be eligible for re-election to the Executive Board until the lapse of one year. Terms shall be constituted such that approximately one-third of the Board’s terms expire in each year.

C. Function.

The Executive Board shall act for the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia between Annual Meetings, but it shall not alter any directive of the Convention. The Executive Board may make recommendations at any meeting of the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia.

D. Quorum.

A majority of the Executive Board members in office shall constitute a quorum.
E. Removal and Vacancies.

Executive Board members shall attend all Board meetings unless providentially hindered, and in such cases, notice shall be given to the Chairman of the Board, Secretary of the Board, or Executive Director-Treasurer. The Executive Board may declare a Board seat vacant in the event of two consecutive unexcused absences, death of a member, resignation of the member, the Committee member becoming a member of a church not affiliated with the Convention, or the member becoming a member of a church not located in the same ministry area. In the event a vacancy occurs on the Executive Board between Annual Meeting sessions, the President shall appoint an interim replacement to serve until the next Annual Meeting.

F. Meetings.

1. The Executive Board may hold regular or special meetings in or outside of this Commonwealth.

2. The Executive Board may permit any or all Board members to participate in a meeting by, or conduct the meeting through the use of, any means of communication by which all Board members may simultaneously hear each other during the meeting. A Board member participating in a meeting by this means is deemed to be present in person at the meeting.

3. The Executive Board may act without a meeting if all members of the Executive Board approve the action in writing or email. The action shall be evidenced by one or more written or email consents stating the action taken, approved and signed by each member of the Executive Board either before or after the action taken, and included in the minutes or filed with the corporate records reflecting the action taken. Such action shall become effective when a majority of the signed consents approving the action are received, unless the consent specifies a different effective date, in which event the action taken is effective as of the date specified therein provided the consent states the date of execution by each member. A unanimous consent approved has the effect of a meeting vote and may be described as such in any document.

4. Regular meetings of the Board shall be held at a time and place set by the Executive Committee or established pursuant to a directive of the Executive Board. Special meetings of the Board shall be held upon the call of either the Executive Director-Treasurer, Chairman of the Executive Board or President of the Convention. Notice of special meetings shall be given to each member of the Executive Board by the Executive Director-Treasurer, Chairman of the Executive Board or the President of the Convention in writing and by first class mail, deposited at least ten days prior to the date of the special meeting.

ARTICLE III – EXECUTIVE BOARD COMMITTEES.

A. Composition of Executive Board and Committees. The Executive Board shall have an Executive Committee, three (3) standing committees of the Board (Business, Ministries, and Relations), and may create other committees and sub-committees, as
required to carry out the work of the State Convention. The creation of any new committee or elimination of a committee shall only occur by action of the Executive Board passed by a majority of all members present at the Executive Board. The Chairman of the Executive Board shall consult with the Executive Director-Treasurer and the President of the Convention, and upon agreement (by consensus or by majority vote) shall appoint members and chairmen of the Executive Board committees. Executive Board Committee members shall be Executive Board members.

B. General Rules Apply. The rules declared herein for the Executive Board regarding quorum, notice of special meetings, and action without meetings shall apply to Executive Board Committees.

C. Authority of Executive Board Committees. A committee may exercise the authority of the Executive Board only to the extent specified in the Articles of Incorporation, the Constitution or Bylaws, or by resolution of the Executive Board. In no event shall a committee fill vacancies on the Executive Board or any of its committees.

D. Executive Committee Composition. The Executive Director-Treasurer and the other four officers of the Convention, Executive Board Chairman, and the three (3) standing Board committee chairmen shall serve as the Executive Committee with the Executive Director-Treasurer serving as Chairman of the Executive Committee.

E. Executive Committee Responsibilities

1. The Executive Committee shall meet as often as necessary to work in cooperation with the Executive Director-Treasurer and the Executive Board to coordinate the work of the Executive Board and its committees to carry out the work of the State Convention. The Executive Committee has all authority of the Board to accomplish the objectives of the State Convention between Board meetings unless prohibited by the Constitution and Bylaws.

2. In the event of a vacancy in the office of the Executive Director-Treasurer, the Executive Committee shall be responsible for recommending to the Executive Board a Search Committee of seven members who shall be responsible for seeking out and recommending a person for the office of Executive Director-Treasurer of the State Convention.

3. In the event of such vacancy, the Executive Committee shall also be responsible for recommending an interim Executive Director-Treasurer to the Executive Board.

F. Business Committee. It shall be the responsibility of the Business Committee to support the Convention staff by establishing policies and procedures, planning, coordinating, evaluating and making regular reports to the Executive Board. This will involve the areas of budget, personnel, and engaging an independent certified public accounting firm to perform a general audit of the finances of the SBCV.

G. Ministries Committee. It shall be the responsibility of the Ministries Committee to support the Convention staff by establishing policies and procedures, planning,
coordinating, evaluating and making regular reports to the Executive Board. This will involve the areas of church enrichment, church planting and other related ministries.

H. Relations Committee. It shall be the responsibility of the Relations Committee to support the Convention staff by establishing policies and procedures, planning, coordinating, evaluating, and making regular reports to the Executive Board. This will involve the areas of church and denomination relations.

ARTICLE IV – COMMITTEES OF THE CONVENTION

A. Annual Committees. The President shall annually appoint the following committees and a chairman of each committee.

1. Resolutions Committee. This Committee shall be composed of six members who shall meet before and/or during the Annual Meeting to receive proposed resolutions from messengers, to collate and clarify the resolutions received, and to present the resolutions deemed appropriate in finished form to the Convention for action.

2. Nominating Committee. This Committee shall consist of six persons who shall nominate to the Convention at the Annual Meeting persons to fill vacancies on the Executive Board.

3. Credentials Committee. This Committee shall consist of six persons and shall examine the credentials of churches desiring to seat messengers at the Convention's Annual Meeting. After proper examination, the Committee shall recommend action to the Convention. This Committee shall be responsible to examine qualifications and credentials of messengers whose seats are contested and to recommend action by the Convention. The Committee shall also be responsible for registration of messengers. Any messenger or church whose credentials are rejected shall be able to appeal such decision to the Executive Board.

4. Tellers and Ushers Committee. This Committee shall consist of six persons and shall be responsible for securing and leading volunteers in distributing information and collecting and counting ballots, offerings, and other related responsibilities.

5. Order of Business Committee. This Committee shall consist of six (6) persons (officers of the Convention, Executive Director-Treasurer, and Executive Board Chairman). This Committee shall be responsible for planning the Annual Meeting and its program.

B. Special Committees. The President of the convention shall nominate special Committees to the Convention, as the need arises. They shall have the number of people deemed necessary and shall serve until their assigned work is completed.

C. Committee Vacancies. A vacancy in any committee occurs in the event of death, two consecutive unexcused absences, resignation, or the committee member becoming a member of a church not affiliated with the convention. The President shall fill vacancies to serve for the remainder of that year.
ARTICLE V – GENERAL PROVISIONS

A. DATES OF ROTATION — Terms of office for outgoing officers, Executive Board members, and other committee members shall end on the last day of the Annual Meeting, allowing the newly elected officers and committee members to assume their responsibilities as of the conclusion of said meeting.

B. RESOLUTIONS — Resolutions by messengers to be adopted by the SBCV shall be submitted in writing to the Resolutions Committee before the beginning of the first session of the Annual Meeting. Resolutions submitted for adoption by the Executive Board or other standing committees shall be published at least five weeks before the Annual Meeting. Adoption of resolutions shall require a 2/3 majority.

C. MEETINGS — The Annual Meeting of the SBCV shall convene alternately in various regions of the state as determined by the Executive Board. The Executive Board may call special statewide meetings provided a notice is given thirty days in advance stating the specific purpose for such meeting. Action at such meetings will be limited to matters specified in the advance notice of the meeting. Those messengers present shall constitute the quorum.

D. MINISTRY AREAS/REGIONAL GROUPS — For the sake of geographical identity for Executive Board representation and for convention ministries and services, the State Convention shall be divided into as many region/ministry areas as deemed necessary. Local groups may form for the purpose of fellowship and training according to clusters of population of churches and the availability of meeting facilities and leadership.

E. MEMBER CHURCH OBLIGATIONS — Member churches are urged to be involved and supportive of the direction of the Convention. It is expected that member churches of the SBCV will endeavor to maintain a positive Christian witness, and involve themselves in the operation and success of the Convention and, that said participation involves time investments and financial contributions given regularly as Cooperative Program support through the SBCV. The Executive Board shall be responsible to contact any church failing to maintain a positive Christian witness and/or failing to financially support the Cooperative Program through the Convention for a period of one year, and seek to restore the member church; and, if necessary, recommend to messengers in the annual meeting that the church’s affiliation be rescinded.

F. AMENDMENTS — These Bylaws may be amended by the messengers constituting the Convention at any Annual Meeting of Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia by majority vote of those present and voting, provided that notice of the proposed amendment(s) shall have been given at least sixty days in advance of the meeting.