

June 6, 1959

Session Demonstrated  
Unity, Editors Report

By the Baptist Press

Editors of many Baptist state papers said the recent 1959 session of the Southern Baptist Convention demonstrated the Convention's unity and its forward march.

Others also described it as "one of the finest" and several gave considerable space to praise for outgoing Convention President Brooks Hays and his successor in office, Ramsey Pollard of Knoxville, Tenn.

One editor, however, felt Brooks Hays's tenure in office may have damaged the Convention because of his political ties and because of his expressions on the race issue.

But the one idea which recurred more than any other was that of unity. H. H. McGinty, of Jefferson City, Mo., editor of the Word and Way, put it this way concerning the Convention's business: "There were a few divisive issues but many more unifying factors."

J. Marse Grant stated bluntly, "Southern Baptists are united as never before in history. Our World Missions Program is the greatest unifying factor among us . . ." He is editor of Charity and Children, Thomasville, N. C.

Admitting there was some "turbulence and testing" in the sessions, Editor Richard N. Owen of the Baptist and Reflector, Nashville, Tenn., continued, "But the Convention moved unitedly through all the disturbance toward a brighter day."

The Biblical Recorder, Raleigh, N. C., in an editorial by Associate Editor C. W. Bazemore, declared, "We know that we are a compact group united by the overmastering loyalties that bind us, far stronger than the issues that seem at times to divide us."

"Progress, celebration, debate, and unity" marked the 102nd session at Louisville in the opinion of James O. Duncan, acting editor of the Capital Baptist, Washington, D. C.

The ability to debate issues in democratic fashion, such as at Louisville, characterized Southern Baptists as a "mighty, forward-moving force for God," Editor Jack L. Gritz of the Baptist Messenger, Oklahoma City, Okla., told his readers.

The California Southern Baptist of Fresno, Calif., edited by Floyd Looney, reported that . . . "Baptists proved to the world that the things that bind them together are stronger than things which tend to draw them apart. In short, it was a good convention."

Agreeing with Looney's feelings about the caliber of the session was John J. Hurt, Jr., Atlanta, Ga., who edits the Christian Index. Hurt wrote: "The 102nd session of the Southern Baptist Convention can go into the record as one of its finest."

W. C. Fields, in his editorial for the Baptist Record, Jackson, Miss., saw the 1959 session as having a "forward-looking and good" spirit.

The Maryland Baptist's editor, Gainer E. Bryan, Jr., of Baltimore, felt it was the "most dramatic" convention session he'd ever attended.

However, Leon Macon, Birmingham, editor of the Alabama Baptist, was somewhat critical of Brooks Hays, who went out of office as president after serving the two-year limit on terms. It was Hays's statements on the race question which drew Macon's disfavor. He interpreted Hays's president's address as "apparently endorsing integration."

Commenting that some felt Hays has "national political ambitions" Macon added: "If this is true, he has taken unfair advantage of the Southern Baptist Convention to advance his personal ambitions."

In rebuttal, the editor of the Arkansas Baptist said, "Due no small share of the credit for bringing the Southern Baptist ship through the troubled seas of the last two years is Arkansas' own Brooks Hays. A messenger who paid tribute to him from the Convention floor as one sent from God to our Convention for such a time as this, expressed the feeling, obviously, of the vast majority of the more than 12,000 messengers in attendance."

Erwin L. McDonald of Little Rock is the Arkansas editor.

R. G. Puckett, Columbus, editor of the Ohio Baptist Messenger thought Hays merited the title, "Mr. Baptist Layman," for his leadership as president.

In the eyes of Chauncey R. Daley, editor of the Western Recorder, Middletown, Ky., "Hays's address was not matched by many other addresses in this or any other Convention."

In the Rocky Mountain Baptist, Editor Willis J. Ray of Denver, Colo., led off his Convention story with this sentence: "Southern Baptists have their heads lifted high and are still on the march."

And in the Illinois Baptist, Carbondale, Ill., Editor L. H. Moore said, "Baptists left Louisville rejoicing in their blessings and with zeal set themselves to the main task in the months ahead---witnessing and winning souls to Christ."

-30-

#### Good Income Picture For First 5 Months

NASHVILLE--(BP)--The Southern Baptist Convention entered the summer with one of its brightest financial pictures. Receipts for the year to date were running 11.15 per cent ahead of a like period a year ago and comparison of other figures showed an even better gain.

The financial statement for the month of May, issued by Convention Treasurer Porter Routh here, reported \$2,970,508 total gifts for the 31-day period. This brought the five-month total to \$16,070,194 compared with \$14,458,616 for January-May, 1958.

What accounted for an even better financial outlook was the fact that the per centage gain of 1959 over 1958 was significantly greater than the per centage gain of 1958 over 1957 at this point a year ago.

At the end of May, 1958, total receipts were running 8.91 per cent ahead of the previous year.

May receipts this year included \$1,583,602 through the Cooperative Program --undesignated gifts--and \$1,386,905 through designations, which are committed to support special phases of the Convention's program selected by the givers.

Almost nine-tenths of the designated receipts for May were in the Annie Armstrong Offering for Home Missions received in the churches each spring. The Home Mission Board's disbursement in May included \$1,230,633 from this offering.

Cooperative Program receipts for the year 1959 to date were \$7,039,615, up 8.15 per cent over the previous year. Designated receipts were \$9,030,578, up 13.6 per cent over 1958.

The Home Mission Board's disbursement of designated offerings plus its \$224,871 share of Cooperative Program receipts placed it first among agencies in total disbursements for May. The Foreign Mission Board followed with \$621,880 in Cooperative Program funds and \$151,805 in designated funds disbursed to it.

Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Berkeley, Calif., was third with disbursement of \$241,657 through the Cooperative Program, but nothing through designated gifts.

Funds reported through the office of the Southern Baptist Convention treasurer represent only income for the support of Convention agencies and other SBC work. They do not include money retained by local Baptist churches nor by state Baptist organizations.

For the month of May,  
Cooperative Program and \$  
This placed the state

forwarded \$  
in designations for a total of \$  
among those in the Convention.

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